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THE END OF THE STABILISATION OF CAPITALISM AND ECONOMIC STRUGGLES

(On the results of the XII Plenum of the E.C.C.I.).

THE XII Plenum of the E.C.C.I. established the fact of the end of the relative stabilisation of capitalism, and provided a fighting programme of action for the Communist vanguard, to enable it to lead the masses up to the battles for the dictatorship of the proletariat, by the development of the economic and political struggle.

The revolutionary upsurge, as the most important factor bringing about the end of the stabilisation of capitalism, has been expressed with particular clearness, during the recent period, in the powerful development of economic fights. A number of characteristic features of these struggles strongly expressed the increasing militant energy of the working class, the rapid and uneven growth of the revolutionary upsurge.

Since the XI Plenum of the E.C.C.I., the strike movement against the capitalist offensive on the standard of living of the masses has greatly extended. New strata of the proletariat have joined the struggle. This has found expression, chiefly, in the fact that the strike wave has extended to a number of countries (Belgium, Holland, Switzerland, Austria, Sweden, etc.) which were particularly backward in the development of the economic struggle, up to the time of the XI Plenum. One of the new features in these strikes (mainly spontaneous) is the discovery of an extensive stratum of active worker functionaries in them, who have hitherto submitted to the leadership and discipline of the reformist trade union leaders, but are now standing actively at the head of the masses, in the struggle against these leaders, and the capitalist offensive. This was the case during the textile strike in Tvent in Holland, and especially in the miners' strike in Belgium, where thousands of rank and file worker activists showed the most tireless energy in rallying the strikers, and leading the strike, in spite of all the appeals of the reformist trade union centres to end the struggle. These strikes in which the masses took part; the overwhelming majority of them still following the Social-Democratic and reformist T.U. bureaucrats, particularly demonstrate very clearly what enormous changes are taking place among the widest strata of the proletariat.

Further, the widening of the international strike front finds special expression in those countries where the revolutionary upsurge is particularly high. In Spain there have been about 3,000 strikes since the XI Plenum of the

E.C.C.I.; in China during the last 16 months over 1,400,000 workers have struck; in Poland for the first three months of 1932 alone, the number of working days lost was almost twice as great as for the whole of 1931; in Germany where the wave of economic strikes weakened considerably for some months after the XI Plenum of the E.C.C.I., there have been 1,200 strikes in the last half-year, about 500 of them being in September and October this year. All this shows that new and fresh proletarian forces have arisen to resist the capitalist offensive.

The most important feature of the spreading strike wave is the mass nature of the economic battles, and the revolutionary character of the majority of them.

Up to the XI Plenum of the E.C.C.I., the majority of strikes, with the exception of the Berlin metal workers' strike, and the Ruhr miners' strike, were chiefly of a scattered character. But, during the recent period, the strikes have included tens, and hundreds of thousands of workers. 150,000 striking miners in Belgium, 50,000 miners in the strike in Czecho-Slovakia, over 40,000 miners of the Dombrov Basin on strike, and tens of thousands of textile workers at Lodz, in Poland, the huge strike of the Lancashire textile workers in England, the big miners' strike in Pennsylvania, Illinois and Kentucky in the U.S.A.—such is the picture of mass strikes, during the past year. The strikes have extended more and more to the decisive branches of industry. The miners have occupied the first ranks of the workers fighting against the capitalist offensive. A new feature is the drawing in of the metal workers, who lagged far behind in the economic struggle for a long period, into the strike movement. The commencement of a turnover among the metal workers was shown in the sympathetic strike of the metal workers in Belgium; the metal workers' strikes in Germany. (68 metal workers' strikes in September, 1932), in the movements of the metal workers in Poland, and that of the workers in the metal industry in Prague (Czecho-Slovakia).

A new feature, and the most important one in the majority of recent strikes, was the rapid speed at which they became revolutionised. This stood out very prominently in the strike of the miners at Brux in Czecho-Slovakia, where the struggle which commenced against the dismissal of workers in one pit ("Humboldt") grew into a mass strike of all the miners in the district,

grew further to the point of a general strike of the workers of the whole district, accompanied by mass district demonstrations in which 40-50,000 workers took part and bloody conflicts with the police and the troops. This was also the case in Belgium, where the miners' strike in the Borinage district grew into a general miners' strike, extending as the result of the metal workers joining the struggle, and was also marked by stubborn struggles in the streets against the armed forces of the bourgeois state apparatus. The revolutionary character of the Belgian strike was shown, among other things in the fact that the workers drove the "recognised" Social-Democratic leaders, like Vandervelde and Co. from their meetings. Not only the Polish strikes assumed a revolutionary character, but also such strikes as the fitters' in Zurich, in "democratic" Switzerland, during which the workers built barricades, and offered armed resistance to the police and the troops. A revolutionary character is more and more appearing in the partial strikes in Germany, which are taking place, in spite of the actual prohibition of strikes by the Papen Government. There was a clear revolutionary character in the strikes in Barcelona, Seville, and other towns in Spain, and the economic strikes in China and Japan, where they were closely interwoven with the anti-imperialist struggle, and the struggle against war. In the economic struggles of the recent period, the masses produced *new forms of struggle*. The seizure of the factory by the workers in the "Hortensia" factory in Poland, the successful struggle against the closing of factories and dismissals in Reichenberg (Czecho-Slovakia), the slowing down of the conveyor by the workers (in Germany) showed the great variety of forms in which the struggle of the workers against the capitalist offensive took place.

A new feature is the marked *strengthening of the leading rôle of the Communist Parties and the revolutionary T.U. movement* in the economic struggle. The Communist Parties and the red T.U. organisations in some of the big strikes have been able to give examples of revolutionary leadership to the struggling masses. In Poland, the number of strikes led by the Communist Party and the R.T.U.O. for the last two years has steadily grown. Whereas from September, 1930, to April, 1931, the R.T.U.O. in Poland led 53 per cent. of all the strikes, in the seven months (May to December) of 1931, the percentage rose to 67 and in the first quarter of 1932 it even rose to 82 per cent. The Communist Party and the red trade unions of Czecho-Slovakia led the heroic strike of the miners of Brux, and showed great initiative in establishing the united front

from below, and in revolutionising the struggle. Many of the strikes taking place in Germany in the last few months have been led by the Communist Party and the R.T.U.O. The Communist Party and red trade unions of Japan, though driven underground, have been able in the recent period to stand at the head of a number of strikes and some of them have been carried out in an exemplary manner (the strike of the underground railway workers in Tokyo, etc.). The growth of the leading rôle of the Communist Parties and the revolutionary T.U. organisations in economic struggles was accompanied by an increase in the number of *successful* strikes, especially in Poland, where in the first quarter of 1932 the workers won 60 per cent. of the strikes, in Germany—35 per cent. (in September and October) and in Czecho-Slovakia.

The powerful surge of economic fights and the successful results of numerous strikes, have utterly discredited the reformist-Trotskyist-Brandlerite theory of the impossibility of carrying on strikes under conditions of economic crisis. They have shown what a mighty lever the development of the economic struggle of the proletariat is for the revolutionising of the masses, and leading them to decisive struggles; with crushing force.

* * * *

The end of the stabilisation of capitalism, and the transition to a new cycle of revolutions and wars, not only does not minimise the rôle of the economic struggle, but, on the contrary, makes the development of all forms of this struggle a specially urgent task of the Communist Parties, and the revolutionary T.U. movement. The new feature consists in the fact, that the period of social reforms has come to an end. The bourgeoisie are unable to bribe certain strata of the workers to the *previous extent*. The wide capitalist offensive on the standard of life of all sections of the proletariat and the toilers is one of the main lines of the struggle of capital for a capitalist way out of the crisis. Hence, the "sharp contraction of the material basis of reformism," and hence the "cynical treachery to the workers' interests by Social-Democracy," because when Social-Democracy carries out its function as the chief social bulwark of the bourgeoisie, this means, under present conditions, the refusal to struggle for the slightest reforms, and direct support for the capitalist offensive. This is why "the struggle for the elementary needs of the masses brings them into conflict with the very foundation of the existence of capitalism" (XII Plenum). This is why this struggle plays such a tremendous rôle in the undermining of the

mass influence of Social-Democracy, and the reformist T.U. bureaucrats.

The development of economic fights is of special importance at the present time, for the very reason that, as the experience of the recent period entirely shows, it "brings the workers into conflicts" with all the forces of the bourgeoisie and their state apparatus, with Social-Democracy and the reformist T.U. bureaucracy, and makes it possible and necessary to revolutionise their struggle for everyday demands more than ever before, to raise them to higher and higher stages, *to convert them into a direct political struggle* against the capitalist system itself. The significance of the economic struggle is increased by the fact that the wave of economic strikes forms the best ground for the development of *mass political strikes*, which are the *concrete slogans of the present day* in a number of countries. The wide spread of the economic struggle helps to *combine* both forms of strike, which gives the struggle special intensity and force. It is possible to draw the widest strata of the workers into the struggle for the most urgent economic demands, including those who are not yet prepared to act on the political slogans of the Communist vanguard. But, having roused these masses to the economic struggle, it is possible and necessary to lead them further to bigger struggles. For this reason the Plenum pointed out that:

"The economic struggle of the proletariat . . . in the overwhelming majority of countries, at the present stage, is the *fundamental link* for leading the masses to the forthcoming big revolutionary battles."

The increasing importance of the economic struggle, under the conditions of the end of the stabilisation of capitalism, makes it still more impermissible to *lag behind*, in the organisation of the struggle of the masses for their urgent demands. The wide extent of the capitalist offensive, and the enormous intensification of the class antagonisms in capitalist countries, renders it possible to draw the *majority* of the working class into the economic struggle. This is, at the present time, the central task. In practice, so far, in the chief countries, only hundreds of thousands have been embraced by strikes for economic demands, and the actions of the unemployed; of the millions who are being subjected to a worsening of the conditions of labour and life. For this reason, the XII Plenum laid down, as the chief point in the lagging behind of the revolutionary movement, that:

"The Communist vanguard and the revolutionary T.U. movement *however*, has not since the XI Plenum of the E.C.C.I. succeeded in rousing the majority of the working class to

the struggle against the unceasing attacks of capital."

One of the chief causes of this lagging behind is rooted in the *insufficient* extent to which the majority of Communist Parties, and revolutionary T.U. organisations, took the line of the *independent* development of *all forms* of the economic struggle.

A large number of strikes, especially in France, U.S.A. and Great Britain, but also in Spain, China, India, and a number of other countries, were not only without the leadership of the Communist Parties and the revolutionary T.U. movement, but frequently took place quite apart from them. In particular, the under-estimation of partial factory strikes led to such a position in Germany, in 1931, that for several months, when the employers cut wages in various factories, the Red trade unions and the R.T.U.O. did not take steps to organise the masses for resistance to this offensive of capital, which played quite an important rôle in the weakening of the strike movement, for a certain period in Germany. This fact itself arose, because the Party cells, the sections of the red trade unions, and the groups of the R.T.U.O. had weak connections with the working masses. On the other hand, a correct line, for the everyday defence of the needs of the workers, and the principle of organising partial strikes in separate factories, by the Communist Parties and the Red T.U. organisations in Poland and Czecho-Slovakia, led to the development of an unbroken wave of strikes in these countries, and prepared the ground for mass economic strikes. The increased attention paid recently to the development of partial strikes in individual factories by the German C.P. and the R.T.U.O. was an important prerequisite for the new wave of strikes now taking place in Germany.

The chief cause of the insufficient development of the economic struggle of the masses, was the fact that the Communist Parties, and the revolutionary T.U. movement, still show very poor ability in overcoming the chief hindrance to the wide development of the strike movement of the workers—the mass influence of Social-Democracy and the reformist T.U. bureaucrats—in the process of the struggle, by establishing the united front from below.

* * * *

To prepare the masses for decisive fights means, above all, to tear them away from the influence of Social-Democracy and the reformist T.U. bureaucrats — the chief social bulwark of the bourgeoisie.

Social-Democracy and the reformist trade unions have unquestionably weakened, during the

recent period, but they still carry with them millions of workers, and in some countries, the basic strata of the proletariat. In face of the tremendous unrest, and the growth of the militant sentiments of the masses, the Social-Fascist leaders are adopting the most expert manœuvres to keep the masses under their influence. They are not only increasing their "Socialist" phraseology, but they are heading given strikes, for the purpose of blunting their edge, which is directed against the whole capitalist system, and they even declare one-day general strikes (March 16 in Poland). The Social-Fascist leaders fully understand, that they can only fulfil their rôle, as the chief social bulwark of the bourgeoisie, when they have considerable proletarian masses with them. This is the reason they now select those forms and methods of wrecking the struggle of the working class, which will hide the treachery of these leaders, as far as possible, from the masses. Only right opportunists could fail to see, that the main feature in the tactics of the reformist trade union bureaucrats, when carrying out these "left" manœuvres, including the declaration of individual strikes, is to guarantee such position for themselves as will enable them to strangle the militant initiative, and the militant actions of the masses. Their influence on enormous masses of workers, and the still feeble exposure of these manœuvres by the Communist Parties enables them to accomplish this task in many places yet, hindering the revolutionising of the working masses in this way. Thus, they carry out their function, as the main bulwark of the bourgeoisie.

The ways and methods of surmounting this chief hindrance to the development of the struggle of the masses, are the organisation of this struggle by the extensive and consistent operation of the tactic of the *united front from below*, bringing about a transformation in the work *inside the reformist and other similar trade unions*, and correct mass work in the *factories* and among the *unemployed*.

* * * *

The programme of the Comintern* laid down that:

"United front tactics occupy an important place in the tactics of the Communist Parties throughout the whole *pre-revolutionary period*.

The correct and wide operation of this tactic is of special importance, at the present time, when it is necessary to prepare the masses at accelerated speed for the decisive struggle for power by the organisation of economic and political fights.

The possibilities of the *organisation of the united front* have increased enormously. The bourgeoisie are conducting their offensive on the standard of life of the proletariat on a wide front. This offensive is striking at every section of workers and wide masses of toilers. Illusions are shattering which have restrained backward masses of workers from joint struggle with the revolutionary workers. The world economic crisis, and the rapid complete impoverishment of masses has swept away the illusions of part of the workers, that a "planned" improvement of the standard of life of the masses under capitalism was possible. The rise of the strike wave, and the successful outcome of many strikes has delivered a shattering blow at the reformist theory, that it is impossible to conduct successful strikes during a period of crisis. The crisis of bourgeois democracy, such things as the decree, which swept the Social-Democratic ministers of the Prussian government from their posts, undermine the Social-Democratic theory of "the democratic conquest" of the bourgeois state among the masses. Great heavings are taking place among the broad masses of reformist workers. Ever new strata of the proletariat are feeling the strivings of the workers towards unity in the struggle.

The experience of the economic struggles of the recent period, has shown that the organisation of strikes, and their result depends, above all, on the *correct application of the tactic of the united front from below*. All opportunist and bureaucratic distortions of this tactic lead to the retarding of the struggle, the defeat of strikes, and damage to the influence of the Communist Parties, and the revolutionary T.U. movement. In some places in Germany, the development of the economic struggle was hindered, by an underestimation of the tactic of the united front, in the organisation of the economic struggle; and the replacement of *proletarian democracy*, by domineering, on the part of various organs of the R.T.U.O. This took place during the movement in the Ruhr in January, 1932,* and in some other places. It is very instructive to compare the results of the correct use of the tactic of the united front during the miners' strike in Brux and the opportunist distortion of it in Ostrau in April, 1932,† and in Kladno in September, 1932.‡ On the basis of the initiative and revolutionary activity of the red trade unions, the presentation of correct demands, the application of wide proletarian democracy, a correct approach to the masses, and the lower activists of the reformist and national-socialist trade unions, and

*See "Communist International," No. 11/12 (1932).

†*ibid.*

‡*ibid.*

*Modern Books. 6d. pp. 62.

decisive struggle against the leaders of these unions, on the basis of the united front from below, it was possible to carry on a mass strike in Brux, to fight for over a month, to carry the strike to the point of a general strike of the whole district, to obtain partial successes, to expose the reformist T.U. bureaucrats, and to raise the authority of the red trade unions. In Ostrau, the leaders of the red trade union, when preparing for the strike, attempted to "supplement" the united front from below by concessions to the reformist leaders — the united front from above, — thus making it possible for the T.U. bureaucrats to carry through a series of deceptive manoeuvres ("we are fighting side-by-side with the red trade unions"), and it was impossible to develop a wide strike. The struggle was wrecked.

The attempt to form a united front from above, when preparing for the strike in Kladno, in September this year, the "trifling concessions" during the preparations when negotiating with the reformist leaders, led to the development of the struggle in Kladno being restrained for several weeks.

The revolutionary operation of the tactic of the united front includes, as an inseparable part, the confirmation of the *leading rôle of the Communist Parties and the revolutionary T.U. movement*, in the course of the struggle. This cannot be achieved by giving commands, but by practical initiative, and by concrete leadership of the struggle, by all the supporters of the red trade unions, and the R.T.U.O. In the strike at Brux, in the strike of the Warsaw tramway-men, in the Berlin metal workers' strike, the red trade unions, and the R.T.U.O. obtained the leading rôle by working out and formulating the slogans of the strikes, putting them before the workers for discussion, agitating for the struggle for these demands, being the most active members of the strike committees, mobilising the whole organisation to aid the strikers, bringing forward sharper slogans and higher forms of the struggle at suitable stages, making correct propositions, convincing the workers of their correctness and consolidating the united front of the strikers. It was precisely because the Communist Parties, and the revolutionary T.U. organisations, as such, and their members, were the foremost fighters, and the most active leaders in the struggle, not usurping the place of the organs of leadership, and their members in the struggle, but activating them in every way, that the masses saw and understood the leading rôle of the red T.U. organisations in these struggles.

These strikes, and the whole experience of the economic struggle in the recent period shows

that the successful realisation of the united front presupposes the most decisive resistance to opportunist attempts to hide the face of the Communist Parties and the red T.U. organisations, and obliterate their principal line in the struggle. *It will never be possible to split the reformist workers away from their leaders by making concessions in principle in the name of "unity at any price."* Such concessions frequently arise from an incorrect view, that there are no divergencies in principle between the revolutionary workers and the Social-Democratic workers. Such views promote the castration of the revolutionary content of the united front tactic. The purpose of this tactic consists precisely in drawing the reformist workers into the front against capital, by convincing them, by daily intercourse in the factories and the trade unions, by practical defence of the interests of all workers, and putting forward correct slogans, for which the reformist workers are prepared to fight now, and in the process of the fights for everyday demands, to show them that the path of the revolutionary class struggle is the only way to the liberation of the proletariat. The degree to which the illusions of the reformist workers are dispersed concerning bourgeois democracy, concerning the rôle of their leaders, depends, to a tremendous extent, on the degree to which the leading rôle of the revolutionary organisations has been confirmed in these fights, and the firm line of principle carried out by them. "An opportunist obliteration of differences of principle when operating the tactic of the united front" (resolution of the Plenum) can be of benefit only to the reformist T.U. bureaucrats.

The tremendous significance of the tactic of the united front, for preparing the masses for decisive fights, requires a determined elimination of the *underestimation and insufficient operation of this tactic and disbelief in the possibility of drawing the reformist, Christian, nationalist and other workers into the struggle.* The miners' strike and the general strike in Belgium, the Lancashire textile strike in England, the strike at Brux, are clear evidence that the reformist workers want to fight at the present time, and are fighting, against the wishes of their leaders. *Chatter about the impossibility of organising the united front for the struggle along with the reformist and other workers, which frequently arises from a sectarian estimate of the reformist workers and the lower activists of the reformist trade unions as "little Zoergiebelts," serves as a cloak for opportunist passivity in the organisation of the united front.* This explains, to a certain extent, why the tactic of the united front has entered very weakly, as yet, into the practical

work of the red trade unions and the R.T.U.O. Even in Germany, the revolutionary T.U. organisations, in the course of many months in 1931 and the beginning of 1932, let slip many possibilities of appealing to the reformist, Christian "Hirsch-Dunker" and other workers, and to the lower activists of these unions, to enter into a joint struggle against wage-cuts, dismissals, and the reduction of unemployment relief. And the fact that such appeals, supported by suitable mass work, would have produced good results, is shown by the wide response given to the appeal of the C.C. of the German Communist Party and the all-German committee of the R.T.U.O. in April, 1932, to prepare for a joint struggle with all organisations which wish to take concrete steps for the mobilisation of the masses to resist the capitalist offensive. The weakness of the red trade unions of France, and the extreme backwardness of the Minority Movement in Great Britain, in the independent leadership of the economic struggle arise, to an extremely great extent, from the insufficient use of the tactic of the united front, by these organisations. A question which is closely connected with the tactic of the united front is the *exposure of the manœuvres of the reformist leaders in economic struggles*. When preparing and carrying on a series of strikes, the revolutionary trade union organisations have frequently been caught unawares, by the varied manœuvres of the reformist trade union bureaucracy. This was the case when preparing for the October strike of miners in the Ruhr in 1931,* when the leaders of the A.D.G.B. applied to the Brüning government with a demand to suspend the wage cuts, announced their willingness to fight, and together with the Christian and Hirsch-Dunker unions issued a declaration on the "united front of all trade unions." This was the case in the U.S.A. during the miners' strike, when the "left" reformist leaders issued a deceitful appeal for the "united front." This was the case with the declaration of the one-day general strike on March 16th, 1932, in Poland. Separate revolutionary trade union organisations either did not foresee the possibility of such manœuvres or did not react to them, did not take account of them or allowed themselves, to be deceived by their frequently very "left" maskings. This arises, on the one hand, from the underestimation of the manœuvring ability of the reformist trade union bureaucracy, particularly from the incorrect opinion, that the reformist trade unions will not lead any strikes and are unable to do so. On the other hand, this is explained by the insufficient initiative of the revolutionary trade unions,

in the organisation of the broad united front from below. In places where the red trade unions and the R.T.U.O. *actively and correctly* created the united front from below (Brux, the tramway strike in Warsaw, Borinage), the reformist manœuvres broke down against this united front of the proletariat.

For the successful organisation of the united front from below, it is necessary not only to eliminate the contemptuous attitude to the *material success of the strikes*, which is to be observed in some supporters of the revolutionary trade union movement. In addition to the fact that the material success of the workers in a strike hits at the capitalist plans for getting out of the crisis at the expense of the wide working masses, it still further rouses the fighting spirit of the workers and stimulates the extension of the front of the strike struggle. To the extent that the reformist or Christian workers become convinced by experience, that the supporters of the revolutionary trade union movement try in practice to improve their material situation with all their force by the struggle, it will be easier to draw them into the united front organised for this struggle.

The wide and correct application of the tactic of the united front below, is the chief weapon for undermining the mass influence of the reformist trade union bureaucracy, for the development of the struggle of the masses, and rousing them to decisive fights.

* * * *

The preparation of the masses for the struggle for power, the tearing of these masses from under the influence of the Social-Democratic and reformist trade union bureaucracy, requires a *radical change in the field of revolutionary work, inside the reformist, Christian and other trade unions*.

The reformist trade unions are the fundamental mass basis of Social-Democracy. Every position won by the revolutionary trade union opposition in the reformist trade unions, is a fissure in the basis of the main social bulwark of the bourgeoisie. To win the majority of the workers organised in the reformist trade unions to the side of Communism means, in the chief capitalist countries, to destroy the mass influence of Social-Democracy.

For this very reason, the Comintern, and the R.I.L.U., have repeatedly and insistently pointed out the necessity of extensive work by the adherents of the revolutionary trade unions inside the reformist trade unions. They demanded the strengthening of this work with special insistence at the beginning, and throughout the whole course of the revolutionary upsurge (the third

*See "Communist International," No. 11/12 (1932).

riod). The IX Plenum of the E.C.C.I., the VI Congress of the Comintern, the X Plenum of the E.C.C.I., the V Congress of the R.I.L.U., the XI Plenum of the E.C.C.I., the session of the Central Council of the R.I.L.U., emphasised again and again, the urgency and enormous importance for the cause of the proletarian revolution, of work inside the reformist trade unions, particularly at the present period. In this connection, they pointed out that this work is the most necessary prerequisite for the independent leadership of economic struggles and the formation and strengthening of the independent revolutionary trade union movement, i.e., for the carrying out of the chief tasks of the sections of the R.I.L.U. in the period of revolutionary upsurge.

In spite of this, even in such countries as Germany and Great Britain, where there are old and really mass trade unions, the struggle for the organised workers inside these unions not only failed to strengthen but in some sectors it even became weaker.

The cause of this is rooted, above all, in the existence of a series of incorrect opportunist views in the ranks of the revolutionary trade union movement with regard to the work in the reformist trade unions, and in the estimation of the workers organised in these unions.

One of these ideas—the right opportunist view—is trade union legalism, retreats and capitulation before the trade union bureaucrats. Such ideas are concretely expressed in the fact that some sections of the revolutionary trade union opposition in the reformist trade unions have limited their work to the framework of the trade union rules, the framework “permitted” by the reformist trade union bureaucracy. And as the latter are fighting against the wide development of the economic struggle of the workers with all their strength, against the promotion of single lists at the elections for the factory committees with the inclusion of unorganised workers, against trade union democracy, against the breaking of government arbitration decisions, etc., the right opportunists stopped their oppositional work, on the grounds that such work will lead to their expulsion from the unions, or carried on their work in a reformist spirit. Opportunists of this kind where they have displayed some activity, have put forward the slogan “make the bureaucrats fight.” The idea behind this slogan is the abandonment of an independent struggle against the wishes of the reformist trade union bureaucrats, and to consent to fight only with the blessing of the bureaucrats. These opportunists have carried on an open and concealed struggle against

the formation and strengthening of the independent revolutionary T.U. movement.

Such a right opportunist line is chiefly explained by the fact, that the various positions which the revolutionary trade union opposition has, in the reformist trade unions (over 200 small local boards, and a number of officials in the reformist trade unions in Germany, about 100 officials in the unions in Austria, various positions in the trade unions in England, etc.), have in most cases been either utilised very poorly, or else not at all, for the struggle with the trade union bureaucrats and the extension of the influence of the trade union opposition in the unions.

Another opportunist line — the “left” line — consists mainly of an underestimation of the work inside the reformist trade unions, the confusing of the proletarian mass of members and the lower activists with the treacherous leaders, the statement that the workers organised in the reformist trade unions are a “solid reactionary mass” and the statement that, in view of this the “members of the reformist trade unions cannot be won over.” This theory, which has found the most complete expression in the views of Merker and his followers in Germany, has especially hindered the organisation of work inside the reformist trade unions, and to the extent that it has not been completely eliminated among some sections, it still hinders the work. Opportunists of this type draw a complete parallel between the labour aristocracy and the whole mass of skilled workers. And as the reformist trade unions are recruited principally among the skilled and trained workers, these “leftists” consider the whole mass of workers organised in the reformist trade unions and the lower reformist trade union activists to be a *social* group connected with the bourgeoisie and call them a “reactionary mass.” Therefore, the opportunists of the “left” declare the winning over of these masses for the revolutionary class struggle impossible, and work in the reformist trade unions, useless.

The whole of this “opinion” has nothing in common with Marxism-Leninism and is a “leftist” covering for capitulation to the reformist trade union bureaucracy, to the difficulties of hard everyday work for the winning over of the masses from under their influence. The aristocracy of labour *never was* equivalent to the whole mass of skilled workers, but consists, in the main, of Social-Democratic party functionaries, trade and municipal bureaucrats and others from the highest ranks of the skilled workers. Such a theory is still more harmful in the present period because, with capitalist rationalisation, which has led to a considerable levelling in the proletariat, and a contraction of the economic possibility for

the bourgeoisie to bribe certain sections of the workers *to the previous extent*, the face of the aristocracy of labour has changed.

Certain sections of the workers in industry who are bribed by the bourgeoisie are now recruited chiefly from the best paid; "boosters" at the conveyor, from foremen, overlookers and such like. The new feature at the present time is the fact that the wide offensive of capital on the standard of life of the masses is striking now at *all sections of the workers*, and strikes very strongly at the skilled and trained workers. The new feature is, that in connection with this general sharpening of class contradictions, and the open bankruptcy of the reformist theories, the extensive unrest among the masses is spreading to wider and wider groups of the lower reformist trade union activists. This creates enormous new possibilities for successful work in the reformist trade unions, for the winning over of the masses in them.

The development of work inside the reformist trade unions has been hindered also by the refusal of part of our supporters to fight for elected positions, and put forward demands, at trade union meetings and conferences. This refusal is explained away by the fact that as it is impossible to win the central apparatus of the trade unions, there is no sense in fighting at all for elective functions. However, the X Plenum of the E.C.C.I. pointed out—and experience has fully confirmed—that it is necessary to fight for the elected functions, and that it is possible to win a number of lower organs and functions in the trade unions. As for the putting forward of demands by the trade union opposition and the defence of them in the trade unions, this is absolutely necessary, so that the organised workers shall know what the trade union opposition is fighting for, what it concretely demands for the protection of the interests of the workers, and also for the exposure of the trade union bureaucrats who resist the mobilisation of the masses for the struggle and oppose these demands. The working out of demands by the R.T.U.O., their presentation at general meetings of the trade union, and the struggle for them, has nothing in common with the opportunist tactic of "making the bureaucrats fight."

The "leftist" slogan of "destroying the trade unions" has done much harm to the organisation of revolutionary work inside the reformist trade unions. This incorrect slogan led to the expulsion of revolutionary workers from the unions for a number of years, in the first revolutionary crisis, and thus to the strengthening of the influence of the reformist trade union bureaucrats, on the organised workers. During the

recent period, this slogan, which was long ago condemned by the Comintern and the R.I.L.U. has again been repeated by individual supporters of the trade union opposition. For instance, in Germany in the summer of 1932 this slogan was propagated in some of the organs of the revolutionary press, and put concretely, in the form of the demand not to pay membership dues to the reformist trade unions. The German Communist Party and the R.T.U.O. were perfectly correct in condemning this slogan, and preventing its dissemination. Not the "destruction" of the reformist trade unions, but the winning over of the masses organised in them, is the slogan of the Comintern and the R.I.L.U.

Something which inevitably hinders the development of the work of the R.T.U.O., in the reformist trade unions, is the mistaken statement that "the reformist trade unions are schools of capitalism." Such a definition of the essence of the reformist trade unions is not only incapable of mobilising the workers to strengthen revolutionary work in these unions, but it must lead to the slogan of "destroying the trade unions." The definition of the reformist trade unions as "schools of capitalism," presupposes that the members of these unions, who go into the unions to defend their everyday interests, and join them voluntarily, are conscious helpers of the bourgeoisie, which is putting the real state of affairs upside down. To the extent that Communists, and the trade union opposition, led by them, carry on a struggle in the reformist trade unions, the latter are not schools of capitalism, but the arena of struggle between the Communist Party and the Social-Democrats for the masses. This incorrect idea cannot help in any way to expose the menshevik theory of the reformist unions as "schools of Socialism."

In Germany, a great rôle in the weakening of the revolutionary work in the reformist, Christian and Hirsch-Dunker unions was played by the completely incorrect contrasting of the task of forming an independent revolutionary trade union movement, to the task of work inside the reformist trade unions. This explains the fact that, after the formation of the red union of metal workers in Berlin and the red union of miners, the R.T.U.O. was liquidated in the Berlin metal works, and in the mines of the Ruhr.

The revolutionary trade union opposition is the organisation which must include in its ranks both the organised and the unorganised. Its chief tasks were defined by the XII Plenum as:

"The independent leadership of economic struggles, work in the reformist, catholic and other trade unions, the isolation of the treacherous trade union bureaucracy from the masses of

members, and the formation of a mass organisation linking up the Communist Party with the working class. . . . The revolutionary trade union opposition, on the wave of the growing revolutionary upsurge and the movement of the masses against the reformist trade union bureaucrats, must become a lever and an organisational base for the formation of independent red unions."

Some of the supporters of the R.T.U.O. have not understood the multiplicity of the tasks of this organisation, and in particular have almost entirely left out of account the task of work in the reformist trade unions. But the whole experience of the recent period has shown that the strengthening and growth of the red trade unions and the R.T.U.O. depends directly on the extent to which revolutionary work is carried on in the reformist, Christian and other trade unions.

The exposure of all right and "left" opportunist attitudes is the primary prerequisite for a real turn towards work in these unions. Comrade Piatnitsky especially emphasised the importance of this task in his speech at the Plenum.

A very important matter is the question of the contents and the *methods* of the revolutionary work inside the reformist and other trade unions. The contents of the work must consist in the everyday defence of the needs of the organised workers, inside the unions and in the factories, the development of their struggle, for which purpose it is necessary to have an exact knowledge of their conditions of labour, the contents and the date of expiry of the collective agreements made by the union, to fight for trade union democracy, for the winning of elective positions in the unions so as to utilise them, for the mobilisation of the masses for economic and political struggles, to carry on agitation and propaganda among the members of the unions, and concretely expose the treacherous policy of the reformist trade union bureaucracy. For this purpose, the supporters of the trade union opposition must work out concrete demands corresponding to the most burning needs of the workers, must speak at all meetings, conferences, congresses of the trade unions, and take part in all the elections to the organs of the unions, etc. Revolutionary work will only be successful in the reformist and other trade unions when it is carried on in a *decisive irreconcilable struggle against the reformist, Christian and other trade union bureaucrats.*

* * * *

The leading of the masses to the struggles for power means, further, the organisation and the wide extension of the struggle and the movement of the unemployed. In a number of the chief capitalist countries, the unemployed and the part-

time workers form half, or more than half of the whole proletariat. The bourgeoisie try in every way to sow dissension between the employed and the unemployed. In this respect, extremely characteristic is the emergency decree of the Papen government in Germany, which allows the employers to give some of the unemployed work, while keeping the total wages paid unchanged, i.e., by reducing the wages of the employed workers, and by giving subsidies from the government funds, which have been obtained from taxes on the toilers. This measure, which cannot either eliminate or reduce unemployment, is intended by the bourgeoisie to drive the employed and the unemployed against each other. On the other hand, experience has shown the great importance of the development of actions of the unemployed for the spreading of strikes and vice versa, the importance of the strike movement for the extension of the struggle of the unemployed. *The struggle of the unemployed for relief and against forced labour drives them into direct conflict with the bourgeois government.* All this shows the "growing political significance of the unemployed movement." Out of the millions of unemployed, only tens or hundreds of thousands have so far taken part in the activity of the unemployed. During the recent period, the unemployed movement, in a number of countries (Germany, Czecho-Slovakia, U.S.A.), has even weakened, and in almost all countries except Great Britain, where this movement has risen again, it is noticeably lagging behind the strike movement of the employed workers.

Such a situation can be explained, to a considerable extent, by the poor ability of the revolutionary trade union movement to put forward the partial demands which most excite the unemployed and to organise the struggle for these demands, and especially the insufficient work for linking up the struggle of the employed with that of the unemployed. In a number of countries, the struggle of the unemployed at the time of its highest rise (in Germany, winter 1931, in Czecho-Slovakia, autumn 1931 and winter 1932, etc.) began to develop precisely on the basis of partial demands such as a single grant of money, boots, warm premises for the unemployed, for the issue of coal gratis, against the eviction of the unemployed from their houses, and such everyday questions. The revolutionary trade union organisations, however, do not know how to evoke the movement of the unemployed systematically and every day in defence of these demands. Therefore, it becomes more difficult to organise and extend the movement for bigger demands. Many correct programmes of demands

of the Communist Parties, and the revolutionary trade union organisations, are not made well known to the wide masses of the unemployed, and therefore do not become real programmes of struggle. As for linking up the struggle of the unemployed with the struggle of the employed workers, it may be said that, although it has been possible to mobilise the unemployed to support the strikes of the employed workers, etc., very feeble steps have been taken to call strikes, and other forms of action, of the employed to defend the demands of the unemployed. The Plenum specially emphasised the necessity of linking these up, from this point of view, in particular. This, among other things, means a strengthening of the struggle against dismissals, for the payment of compensation to dismissed workers, and against the laws of forced labour for the youth and the unemployed.

The Plenum made it obligatory for all revolutionary organisations to make a start immediately to develop the struggle of the unemployed and to permeate all the work among the unemployed, with systematic explanations to the proletarian masses that "unemployment is an inevitable accompaniment of the capitalist system, and can only be eliminated by the dictatorship of the proletariat."

* * * *

The carrying out of all these tasks depends on the condition, and the concrete mass work of the red trade unions and the R.T.U.O. The red trade union organisations can carry out their function as the mass basis of the Communist Party and the transmission belts to the masses, if they are able to take in broader strata of workers, than those who are organised in the Communist Parties. However, the growth of the red trade union organisations, has lagged behind the growth of the Communist Parties in the recent period. In Germany, where the Communist Party has almost doubled since the XI Plenum, the R.T.U.O. and the red trade unions have been almost stagnant. In Austria, the Communist Party has grown to 7,000 members and the R.T.U.O. to only 3,400. In Czechoslovakia, where the Party has likewise almost doubled, the red trade unions, which are numerically stronger than the Communist Party, have increased by only 50 per cent. In France, where the unitary trade unions include several times as many workers as the Communist Party, the number of members of the red trade unions has even slightly dropped. This shows that the revolutionary trade union organisations still do not sufficiently know how to adopt those forms and methods which correspond to the aims of the

unions, as the broadest mass proletarian organisations. In the red trade union organisations, there is still a completely insufficient development of *trade union democracy*, to ensure the activation of all the members of the red trade unions, and the R.T.U.O., and their attraction into the work. In some of the red trade union organisations there is an absolutely impermissible supercentralism, and bureaucratic methods of giving commands, and substituting the mass of members by the trade union organs. Many of the red trade unions have not yet made the *factory* the principal basis of their organisation and their work. The basic work of the red trade unions and the R.T.U.O. is still carried on *outside* the factories and mills. And this, in turn, leads to weak contacts with the wide masses.

Contact with the masses is the chief prerequisite for the development of struggles, and the growth of the unions and the R.T.U.O. Without it, it is impossible to know the sentiments of the workers exactly, their needs; it is impossible to seize on the concrete link which can put the masses into motion. But close contact with the masses presupposes the activation of all members of the union, and the transfer of the work to the factory, with concentration on the *biggest* of factories, to the reformist unions, to the labour exchanges. At the present moment when we are on the threshold of new changes among the working masses, in a situation which was defined by the Plenum as "fraught with unexpected outbreaks and sharp turns in events," close everyday contact with the masses takes on unusual importance.

From the insufficient development of trade union democracy, and poor contact with the masses, arises the weakness of the *cadres* of the revolutionary trade union movement, their extremely slow renewal and enlargement, in spite of the discovery of tens of thousands of new activists in the numerous battles. And this, in turn, hinders the rapid elimination of Social-Democratic, and anarcho-syndicalist methods of work which still exist in some parts of the revolutionary trade union movement.

The main thing necessary to convert the red trade unions, and the R.T.U.O., into real mass organisations, is a clear line for the organisation and development of all forms of the economic struggle of the proletariat for their everyday demands, and an efficient participation in the struggle against Fascism, reaction and imperialist war.

The manner in which the transmission belt to the masses will function depends, above all on the motor—the Communist Parties. This is why the

enum made it obligatory on all the Communist Parties to form *fractions* in the red trade unions and the R.T.U.O., to see that they work properly and systematically, and thus to strengthen the Party leadership of the red trade union movement. The conditions of the end of capitalist stabilisation make it necessary and possible for the *dependent revolutionary trade union movement* to become consolidated in a short time and to become a real mass organisation.

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In view of the approaching decisive fights of the proletariat, it is necessary to carry on a determined *struggle against opportunism*. The Plenum pointed out that:

"The development of the economic struggle of the proletariat under conditions of the end of capitalist stabilisation urgently requires that the communist vanguard pursues a clear and distinct struggle against opportunism, which becomes more dangerous in proportion as the wave of the revolutionary struggle "of the proletariat rises higher."

There can be no question of a really wide development of the mass struggle, of the correct adoption of the tactic of the united front, of a transformation of the work of the reformist trade unions, of the formation of a mass independent trade union movement, without an increased struggle on two fronts, and without a concentration of Bolshevik fire against the right *chief* danger of the Communist Parties, and the revolutionary trade union movement. The red trade union organisations are obliged to embrace the widest strata of workers, including the backward workers, but frequently they have not reached the stage of understanding all the tasks of the Communist vanguard. Any weakening of the struggle against opportunism and the right danger, as the chief danger in the revolutionary trade union

movement, must inevitably have an exceedingly harmful effect on the winning over of the masses, and their consolidation in the revolutionary camp. The Plenum pointed out that capitulation to the reformist trade union bureaucracy and "blocs" with them, neglect to link up partial economic demands with final slogans, the hiding of the face of the red trade unions in economic struggles, neglect to form the R.T.U.O., and other right wing attitudes in the ranks of the Communist Parties, and the revolutionary trade union movement, are the *chief* danger at the given stage of development, to the revolutionary struggle of the proletariat.

At the same time, it is necessary to carry on a most determined Bolshevik struggle against "left" sectarian ideas (the confusion of Social-Democratic workers with their treacherous leaders, underestimation of the tactic of the united front and work inside the reformist trade unions, the theory of "solid reactionary masses," "the destruction of the reformist trade unions," "the reformist trade unions as schools of capitalism," etc.), which hinder really close contacts with the masses, the development of fights and the struggle against the right danger.

The necessity of special vigilance in the struggle against opportunism is signalled by the right opportunist outbreak of Humbert Droz at the Plenum of the C.C.C.P. of Switzerland, and the revival of right opportunism in the C.P. of Poland.

The XII Plenum of the E.C.C.I., which took place under the slogan of the struggle on two fronts, mobilises the Communist Parties, and the revolutionary trade union movement to prepare, organise and lead the struggle of the proletariat against the capitalist offensive, against Fascism, against imperialist war and intervention in the U.S.S.R.

CORRECTION

Corrections to the article of L. Madyar, The World Economic Crisis, published in No. 16 and reprinted in pamphlet form.

Page 551 end of chapter 3, end of line 4 from bottom, instead of "where"—"what."

Chapter 4, line 16, "coal extracted" should read "in 1913," not 1931.

"Oil extracted" should read "in 1913," not 1931.

"Oil excepted," etc., not only fell below 1920, but below that of 1915.

THE WORLD HISTORICAL IMPORTANCE OF THE OCTOBER REVOLUTION

ENVELOPED in powder-smoke, bleeding and hungry, yet illumined by the exalted consciousness that they are in process of becoming the builders of their own fate, the millions of workers, soldiers and peasants, under the leadership of the Party of Lenin, have, with their bayonets, opened the door to the future. On the shattered ruins of the bourgeois state power—the power of an infinitesimal minority, for the oppression of the overwhelming majority, — a new structure was erected through the victory of the armed uprising: the revolutionary Dictatorship of the Proletariat, in alliance with the toiling peasants—a dictatorship which had now found its final form — the form of the Soviet State. Overcoming the barriers in the ranks of the revolutionary working class, sweeping away the ruins of bloody Czarism, and the constitution of the landlords, and, at the same time, winning over the overwhelming majority of the peasantry to its side, the Party of the Bolsheviks subordinated all the means of production to the greatest productive power, the revolutionary working class. It ushered in the period of the transformation of bourgeois society into Communist society; with the October Revolution, humanity commenced its world historical leap forward “from the realm of necessity into the realm of freedom” — that of which humanity’s greatest minds, and all the great utopians—Saint Simon, Fourier and Owen — had dreamt their finest dreams. That which the greatest of the great, the founders of scientific Socialism—Marx and Engels — had already foreshadowed, not as an *ideal* to which reality must adapt itself, but as the aim of a real movement of the revolutionary class, for the annulment of bourgeois conditions—this was made reality by the Party of Lenin, in its armed uprising in October. It was the *victory of the Proletarian Revolution*. That cause for which the best elements of the leaders of the II International — Bebel, Lafargue and many others—had crossed their blades, in furious combat with the leaders of the liberal bourgeoisie, but of which they still had only a very vague and confused conception—the *state of the future*—was now actually erected on the ruins of the bourgeois state. In continual and indefatigable struggle against the material and spiritual power of the whole world bourgeoisie, it developed at a rapid tempo to Socialism.

The wresting of the land and the means of production from the rich for the poor, from the exploiters for the toilers—the continuation of the

class struggle, in the higher forms of the civil war against all attempts at restoration, to break down the resistance of the bourgeoisie, supported by the whole power of world imperialism—“the transition from the simplest tasks of the further expropriation of the capitalists, to the creation of conditions under which the bourgeoisie could not exist or come into being again” (Lenin) — from war communism to the new economic policy, a retreat made to organise the ranks of the fighters for a new offensive against capital—“the development of a general Socialist offensive on all fronts against all remnants of capitalism throughout the whole country” (Stalin)—the completion of the foundation of Socialist economy by means of Socialist industrialisation and the implanting of Socialist forms in agriculture—the liquidation of the last remaining capitalist class (the rich peasants)—the uprooting of capitalism not only in the town, but also in the country—the carrying through, in the main, of the first Five-Year Plan in four years — the consolidation of the national economy of the country on the path of Socialism—thus has the world historical question which had been raised by the October Revolution—“Who will defeat whom?”—been fully and irrevocably decided, in less than fifteen years, in the first “state of the future” in favour of Socialism.

The Party of Lenin, which alone has been able to *correctly interpret* the capitalist world, in its imperialist phase of development, has also understood how to *alter the world*. The October Revolution, and what has been built in the Soviet Union since October, 1917, to make Socialism a reality, has altered not only the former face of Czarist Russia, not only this sixth part of the earth’s surface, but the face of the whole globe as well. The liquidation of the parasitic classes, and the causes giving rise to the exploitation of man by man in the Soviet Union, and, in conjunction with this, the mobilisation of all fighting forces, for the complete destruction of the origins of all class distinction, for the obliteration of classes—the immediate prospect of the second Five-Year Plan—this means not only the *death of capitalism* in the Soviet Union; it simultaneously pronounces the *death sentence of world capitalism*.

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The effects of the October Revolution, which had raised the proletariat to the position of dominating class in one country, did not for a moment confine themselves to that country, in

which the victory had been won. The October Revolution became that which it was destined to become: the prelude to world revolution. By its victory it has created at once the international prerequisites for its further advance, and for the building up of Socialism in the Soviet State. The world historical, epoch-making importance of the October Revolution as prelude to the world revolution has not been diminished by the defeat of proletarian revolutions in individual countries (Germany, Hungary, Bavaria, Finland) any more than by the fact that the tempo of the world revolution has slackened. The chains of imperialism were broken asunder once and for all, by the October Revolution; the October Revolution has created the prerequisites for a general line of cleavage between the bourgeois-reformist, and the proletarian-revolutionary wings within the workers' movement throughout the whole world; it has raised the movements for national emancipation in the colonial, and also in the imperialist countries, to the position of a component part of the world proletarian revolution. The October Revolution has not only mobilised the *former reserves* of the proletarian revolution—the toiling peasantry; it has mobilised, also, the fundamental force of the international revolution, the world proletariat: it has set in motion the reserves of the entire international proletarian revolution, the oppressed toiling masses, the peasantry of the countries of developed capitalism, and the colonial peoples. While creating the *international prerequisites* for its further advance in one country, it has also created the prerequisites for the victory of the world revolution.

The fact that, in a territory which extends over two continents, the state power is now in the hands of the working class, has evoked fundamental changes in the mechanism of world politics. The modest tasks, which Marx set the working masses, at the foundation of the First International in the sphere of international politics—that they should penetrate into the secrets of international diplomacy, keep vigilant watch over the diplomatic tricks of their various governments, work against them, and thwart them by all the means in their power, while uniting in simultaneous demonstrations—were exceeded at one stroke by the proletariat which had seized the state power. The secret treaties of imperialist diplomacy were published, and thus robbed of their force. The Soviet power addressed the demand of peace, without annexations or indemnities, not only to the “hostile” imperialist powers of central Europe, but also to the “allied” countries of the Entente. It thus had the boldness and determination to commence,

in the midst of the imperialist world slaughter, that policy of peace, which it has pursued with iron consistency for fifteen years, in the interests of the toilers of all countries. Thus, in the arena of world politics, a proletarian state has made its appearance alongside of the imperialist powers, and of the independent colonial and semi-colonial countries, and with the appearance of the proletariat as the dominating class on a national scale, the class struggle appeared also as a problem of world politics. The first steps of the class struggle, taken by the ruling working class against international imperialism, were also the steps by which the Soviet Power has brought it about, that its defence through the international proletariat has appeared, not only as the common duty of general international solidarity, but also as the nearest interest of the proletarians of all countries, and the toiling masses of all continents. The emancipation of the great masses of workers and peasants, from the sway of petty-bourgeois patriotism, both at the front, and at home, in the belligerent countries, could only be achieved by the creation of a new international Socialist fatherland, which had inscribed upon its banners the words: An end to imperialist war, and the destruction of its cause—capitalism. The fact that many tens of thousands, among the prisoners of war from “hostile” countries, joined the Red army, to defend the new Soviet power, against the counter-revolution within, and military intervention from without, the general strikes which took place in the countries of the central powers during the peace negotiations of Brest-Litovsk, the revolutionary direct action of the working class to prevent the transport of war materials for purposes of military intervention against the Soviet power, the struggle for the recognition of the Soviet state, the help rendered during the famine year of 1921, the example given by many tens of thousands of workers in capitalist countries who came to render technical assistance in the work of building up Soviet industry, the struggle of the international working class to frustrate fresh attempts at military intervention against the Soviet Union—these were, and are, the International prerequisites *from outside*, which have assured that Socialism can be victoriously constructed in the Soviet Union.

The general cleavage within the working class movement of the *whole world*, between the bourgeois-reformist and the proletarian-revolutionary wings—a cleavage which had already been effected by the Bolsheviks in Russia under the leadership of Lenin, by the beginning of the imperialist epoch—was irrevocably made part of our programme by the October Revolution. The crystallisation of the Communist Parties, as

leaders in the struggle against imperialist war, and for its transformation into a civil war "after the Russian model," the organisation of the Third, the Communist International, as the Party of world revolution, could not be permanently postponed, by any machinations of centrism. The working class of the Soviet State, now in possession of the material power of society, became at the same time the possessor of the dominating spiritual power, and the free speech of the emancipated proletariat rang throughout the whole world — the world in which the war censorship and the censorship of the Social-Democratic Party leaders, in the interests of class co-operation and the victory of their own bourgeoisie, were suppressing every syllable which might contribute to the emancipation of the working class. The authority of the Bolsheviks, as the sole representatives of revolutionary Marxism, increased tremendously among the masses of workers and peasants who were looking for revolutionary leadership after the victory of October. The Left groups of the Social-Democratic Parties—ideologically mixed, and hemmed in, not only by war-time legislation, but also by their sectarian isolation and half-centrist vacillations—could only realise this leadership to a very inadequate extent; they sustained a powerful blow by the victory of October, which meant a clarification of principles and, at the same time, a wide extension of the basis among the masses. The October Revolution not only strengthened the movement against imperialist war in all countries, not only awakened new masses of the workers and peasants to political life, but also showed the concrete aims and concrete methods of the struggle for Socialism, lying ready to hand. The weapons for the entire international revolutionary proletariat, for the struggle against the betrayers of the working class, against the Social-Democratic Parties, against both the Rights and the Centrists, were forged in the fire of the October Revolution. The great arsenal of the Bolsheviks, in which were collected the weapons won during a ten years' struggle for the now victorious revolution, was thus thrown open to the proletariat of the whole world. The Communist International, the world party of the proletariat, has gained, through the October Revolution, a firm organisational support, and an ideological equipment derived from an undefiled heritage of Marxist doctrine, hardened afresh by Lenin for capitalism's new phase of development—the epoch of imperialism and of proletarian revolutions. The power exercised by the October Revolution, as a rousing, organising, and educating force, on the working masses of all capitalist countries, increased during the

entire period of the civil war, and Socialist construction, with every victory won by the workers and collective farmers over all difficulties which confronted them. The actual graphic demonstration of the fact that the proletariat, freed from the yolk of capital, can accomplish the very greatest tasks, is increasing and broadening the number of those working elements who are preparing themselves to defend the conquests of the great October days against their own bourgeoisies with every day. This is an indispensable international prerequisite for the victory of Socialism in one country — in the Soviet Union — and, at the same time, it constitutes an important prerequisite for the further advance of the *world revolution* which was begun in October.

The victory of October accurately foreshadowed the course of the movements for national emancipation in the colonial and semi-colonial countries, and also in the countries of imperialism, for it realised in fact, the right of self-determination up to, and including the formation of separate states, the emancipation of all suppressed nations on the vast territory of the old Czarist empire, by the Soviet power. The October Revolution has shown that the emancipation of the oppressed nations, of the vast toiling masses of the East, who are living under mediaeval conditions of oppression and exploitation, is only possible in alliance with the world proletariat, and has thereby created a huge host of allies for the Soviet power, and the International proletarian revolution. The breaking asunder of the imperialist chains by the Soviet Power, has also made a breach in the walls which encircle the oppressed nations and the colonial and semi-colonial peoples — a breach which has rendered the disrupting of the whole imperialist system, the system erected by the common enemy, possible. The final form of the dictatorship of the proletariat, the Soviet power, has also become the form for the revolutionary democratic dictatorship in China, and the aim of all national revolutions in the East, as well as of the proletarian revolutions to the west of the Soviet Union—in India, Indonesia and China as well as in Germany, Hungary, etc. The front formed by the workers and toiling peasants in the Soviet Union, against imperialism, has been extended to an almost infinite length by the adherence of hundreds of millions among the masses of the world, while these same masses have created a force to guard the rear of Socialist construction — a force whose strength is greater than the auxiliary forces which the working class could ever possibly have expected to come to its aid during emancipation.

The international prerequisites for the further

advance of the October revolution literally coincide with the prerequisites for the advance of the world revolution. The victorious construction of Socialism in one country—in the Soviet Union—forms the work of preparation for the building of Socialism on a world scale. It is precisely in the building up of Socialism that the world historical significance of the October Revolution attains its full expression on this, the Fifteenth Anniversary. The period of the struggle for Socialism—a period which is characterised by the name of the best pupil and fellow-warrior of Lenin, the name of Comrade Stalin—the period of the restoration and the Socialist reconstruction of economy, represents the epoch of advance in the Soviet Union in order to complete the work which October had foreshadowed; the period for laying the foundation, and for the building up of the Socialist economy; the period of cultural revolution; the period of the liquidation of the last remaining capitalist class—the rich peasants—on the basis of all-round collectivisation in the most important districts—it is in this period that the proletariat of the Soviet Union has given proof of the fact that, even when surrounded by a ring of capitalists, the emancipated working class can utilise and develop the forces of production much more rapidly and surely than the class of the capitalists with its centuries-long experience have ever been able to do. The “American tempo” in industrial and agricultural development, the highest tempo which the bourgeoisie was able to reach in the promotion of its economy of exploitation, has been left far behind by the “Bolshevik tempo,” the tempo attained in the development of the productive forces of the Soviet Union, which serves not to swell the riches of the minority, but has become the foundation on which the oldest slogan of all Socialist movements—“Well-being for all”—is now being realised in fact. The basis of the world revolution which the October Revolution created, has during the course of this period become *independent* of the capitalist world. Socialist labour—the glory and honour of emancipated mankind, in place of the pains and punishments of the wage-slaves of capital—has constructed giants of industry, created a new and hitherto unprecedented technical base for agriculture, opened up for mankind, in the State farms, lands which had hitherto remained untilled, and united millions of small peasant farms in collective estates, on the basis of a high farming technique. The at-first-small section of the proletariat, which had seized power, has been increased by millions and fresh millions every year; a new social type has come into being in the countryside—the collective farmer—who is now superseding that remnant

of the feudal days, the peasantry. And all this is taking place at the time when the capitalist world is rapidly and inexorably being precipitated towards the abyss, when millions of unemployed in all capitalist countries, and even those who are still able to find work in capitalist enterprises, have already sunk below the lowest imaginable limit of human existence, when all the promises of the leading minds among the bourgeoisie and their social supporters, the Social-Democrats, as to a turn in the development of the world economic crisis, only increase the doubts, which are felt even in the ranks of the bourgeoisie itself.

The victory of Socialist construction is not only a practical success attained by the working class of one country, who have proved, “not by arguments but by deeds,” that the proletariat, once freed from its exploiters, can “with willing hands and light hearts” carry out its difficult task of fighting for Socialism.

The victory of Socialism is not merely a practical success in one country, nor is it a *partial success* won by the international proletariat; at this very moment, when world capitalism is in its death throes, and all the efforts made by its Social-Democratic doctors, all the cures advocated by them, are impotent to save it from the crisis—at this very time, “a time of the greatest desperation” in the camp of the bourgeoisie in all capitalist countries, we can see that the victory of Socialism in the Soviet Union signifies more than the mere practical success of the proletariat in one country. This victory means the victory of a principle—the principle of the proletariat, Socialism—over the principle of the bourgeoisie, capitalism. The political economy of the bourgeoisie has joined battle with the political economy of the proletariat, and sustained a decisive defeat.

Businesslike agents of the bourgeoisie—whether they wear a mask of Socialism or not—who attempt to regenerate capitalism with a dose of “planned economy,” just as vainly as they once tried to ridicule Socialist planned economy as “a mad idea of the Bolsheviks,” and to nip this idea in the bud, are now giving involuntary witness by their pessimistic attitude, of the victory of the principle of Socialism; and evidence of the same fact, is the optimism of the working masses of imperialist and colonial countries, who are taking the way of the October Revolution in a new revolutionary upsurge, to frustrate the new imperialist world slaughter which now threatens, to break asunder the chains of Fascism, and to shake off their burden of hunger and misery.

The Second International, spurned by the rebel-

tious masses of the workers, places the question of "Socialism" upon its programme, and begins a fresh "discussion" on the "means of attaining power." But there *can* be no Socialism without proletarian dictatorship, there *can* be no way to power without revolution—this is the world historical lesson confirmed by the fifteen years which have elapsed, since the October Revolution. These fifteen years not only confirm the fact that the revolution is necessary, because it is the only way in which the ruling class can be overthrown, but also because the class which overthrows it, the proletariat, cannot fit itself to fulfil its historic vocation of builder of a new society, except in a revolution. However, there can be no revolution without a firm united Bolshevik mass party, which is able to prepare for the revolution, to lead it, and to lead it to victory. The victory of the October Revolution under the leadership of Lenin, the victory of Socialism under the leadership of Stalin—these victories have been won, not only in the struggle against the bourgeoisie, not only in the struggle against the influence of the bourgeoisie, on the working class (through the medium of Social-Democracy),

but also in the struggle against the vacillations in the ranks of the Communist Party itself. There can be no victory unless all vacillations in our own ranks are overcome. The history of the Party of Lenin and Stalin, during the fifteen years since the October Revolution, and the victories of the Party show us that:

"Der Mensch, der zur schwankenden Zeit schwankend gesinnt ist,

Der vermehrt das Uebel und breitet es weiter und weiter.

Aber wer fest auf dem Sinn beharrt, der bildet die Welt sich!" —Goethe.*

The tens of years spent in preparation for the October Revolution, its victory, its march forward to Socialism, its struggle against world imperialism and for the world revolution — all these things are the fruits of the determined, and never-wavering leadership, of the Party of the Bolsheviks.

*"The man who wavers in mind in a time of wavering,
Only increases the evil and spreads it further and further,
But he who firmly sticks to his mind, has a world to conquer."

GERMANY AND POLAND—CENTRAL POINTS OF THE REVOLUTIONARY FRONT

U. LENSKY.

A NEW feature in the situation since the XI. Plenum of the E.C.C.I. is the wide sweep the resistance of the proletariat is taking to the furious capitalist offensive, and particularly the spread of strikes and their comparatively high political level. These are symptoms of the growth of big strikes on the basis of the everyday partial struggle and the sharp intensification of class antagonisms, strikes which, together with other acute forms of mass struggle, are bringing about profound *shifting of classes* and which, if the Communist Parties play an active leading rôle, will lead the masses to decisive battles for power. A new feature of the situation in countries with a revolutionary peasant movement and a national liberation movement, such as Poland, is the *combination of the general sweep of the proletarian struggle with the maturing elements of the agrarian revolution and with revolts for national independence.*

Although the revolutionary upsurge is uneven, although it has its rises and falls, in a number of capitalist countries such as Germany, Poland, the Balkan countries, etc., it has reached a higher level. The profound shifting of classes that is taking place in the various countries in favour of the revolutionary

proletariat is the best social and political symptom of the end of capitalist stabilisation.

The revolutionary upsurge is taking place on the basis of the *general deepening and the great intensification—in some places the catastrophic intensification—of the economic crisis.* The forecasts of the bourgeois economists that the crisis would soon come to an end have been utterly refuted. The slight improvement in the financial and economic situation due to the fall of the English pound and the rise of grain prices proved to be very brief.

Profound changes and landslides have taken place in the development of the world economic crisis which determine the regrouping of imperialist forces. The main phenomena are the sporadic sharpening of the economic crisis in the U.S.A., the rapid growth of the crisis in France despite reparation plunder, and the approach of financial bankruptcy in countries like Germany, Poland, etc.

Developing unevenly, the crisis has assumed catastrophic dimensions in the weakest links of the capitalist system, such as Poland, where the acute crisis is still further intensified by the heavy burden of inflated war budget. The close interweaving of

the industrial, agrarian and financial crises stand out most plainly here. We see stagnation bordering on paralysis in the chief branches of industry with the exception of the munitions industry, the extreme degradation of agriculture and the complete cessation of public investments.

In 1892, Engels wrote that: "Capitalist production ceaselessly working to bring about its own destruction."

The deepening of the world economic crisis inevitably leads to the unprecedented sharpening of all antagonisms at home and abroad, which has already been described by Comrade Kuusinen. As a result the factors of a revolutionary crisis are maturing at a much greater rate in countries like Germany and Poland. Naturally we cannot set out in a cut-and-dried manner the order in which countries will enter the revolutionary crisis. The example of Belgium, which suddenly rushed ahead of other countries in the extent and duration of strikes recently, obviously contradicts such a formal approach.

The draft of the political theses correctly shows that Poland is approaching closely to a revolutionary crisis. This estimate completely coincides with the estimate given by the Central Committee of our Party. But we cannot on this basis, foretell where the revolutionary crisis will start earliest—in Poland or in Germany. That depends on a combination of internal and external factors, on the whole international situation. Although the German proletariat is ten times more numerous and more concentrated than the Polish proletariat, the latter, however, can and allies in the revolutionary peasants and the national independence movement, the strengthening of which is assisted by the proximity of the U.S.S.R.,

THE GERMAN QUESTION AS THE KEY POINT OF THE REVOLUTIONARY SURGE.

As early as 1924, Comrade Stalin, speaking at the Polish Commission of the Congress of the Comintern, said:

"The German question, next to the Russian question, is of the greatest importance. Firstly, this is because Germany is nearer to revolution than any other country in Europe, and secondly, because the victory of the revolution in Germany signifies its victory throughout Europe. Starting from Germany, the revolutionary outburst will spread through Europe. Only Germany will be able to take the initiative in this matter. The victory of the revolution in Germany will guarantee the victory of the international revolution."

It seems to me that in spite of the difference in the conditions prevailing then and now, Comrade Stalin's point of view, in the main, still holds good: *Next to the U.S.S.R., Germany is the most decisive keypoint*

of the extremely unevenly developing international proletarian revolution.

That is why the gaze of all sections of the Comintern is directed towards the great changes now taking place in Germany. That is why a precise estimate of these changes is now the key to the estimate of the international situation.

What has taken place in Germany in the recent period?

In reply to this question we have received the most varied formulations up to the present.

In a letter dated June 25, the C.C. of our Party described the situation in Germany as follows:

"The Government which has come to power is in the main of a *fascist character*, a Government backed by finance capital, heavy industry and the Junker-agrarians, a Government relying on the Reichswehr and the Hitler Storm Troops. To regard this Government as a transitional Government like the Brüning Government would reveal a failure to understand the qualitative changes that have taken place in the situation and would thus be an under-estimation of the real fascist menace. The new Government came into power by the comparatively 'dry road' which had been laid for it by Social-Democracy. But this does not mean that fascism has already firmly established itself, that the decisive struggles between the proletariat and fascism have already been fought out, and that the latter have won all along the line. It must be remembered that the Papen Government has come to power at a period of unprecedented economic crisis and revolutionary upsurge.

The coming of this Government is a symptom of the great intensification of all the antagonisms at home and abroad, including the antagonisms between Poland and Germany. The proletariat is not defeated. Therefore the rapid mobilisation of revolutionary forces under the leadership of the C.P. of Germany is the factor which determines the relationship of forces between revolution and counter-revolution, not only in Germany but on a world scale.

"In reality the Papen programme means the fascist offensive in the economic and political sphere against the toiling masses (new emergency decrees, the annulment of previous social gains, the delegatisation of the C.P. of Germany, the prohibition of mass meetings, and the suppression of workers' organisations). It also means that the Social-Democrats will be driven out of the Government apparatus and replaced by Hitlerite elements, which, however, does not change the rôle of Social-Democracy in principle as the main social buttress of the bourgeois and the worker". It seems to me that the fascist coup in Prussia and

• i.e., without bloodshed.—Ed.

the further development of events as a whole have confirmed the correctness of this estimate. *The German bourgeoisie have already begun to build up their military-fascist dictatorship.* The previous quantitative process of fascisation has changed to a qualitative process. This is the source of the great danger to the German proletariat.

This does not mean that the line of development of the basis of the fascist régime in Germany will be the same as in Italy or Poland. Historically, the situation is now very different. Instead of being at the beginning, we are at the end of the relative stabilisation of capitalism and in a period of general growth of the revolutionary upsurge. Germany is a country with an extremely concentrated proletariat, and its revolutionary organisations are growing and are becoming steeled in mass fights which frequently involve bloodshed. The active resistance to fascist terror is assuming mass dimensions. In spite of the wholesale victimisation and the constant threat of suppression, the influence of the C.P. of Germany is spreading among the proletarian masses. This is shown by the great successes achieved in the Reichstag elections. Social-Democracy has not succeeded in driving the German proletariat along the path of capitulation.

Such are the chief internal factors which determine the tactics of the present ruling group in the German fascist camp, led by Hindenburg. These facts compel the Papen-Schleicher Government to adopt more cautious and flexible manoeuvring tactics in developing the fascist régime as compared with the tactics of frontal attack adopted by Mussolini and even Pilsudsky. In Germany, flanking manoeuvres may sometimes take the place of frontal attacks. The difference in the rate of fascisation in Germany may be quite considerable compared with that in the former countries. The present ruling group in Germany wants first of all to obtain firm control of the apparatus of the State.

The same applies to the rôle of Parliament. At the XI. Plenum of the E.C.C.I. it was emphasised that the question of parliamentary camouflage is not fundamental. "Pilsudsky and his Party," we said at that time, "when developing the Polish variety of the fascist system, had also the Italian type in mind. But it realises the differences in the conditions which determine its tactics in this sphere. Hence the preservation of the parliamentary-democratic decorations together with the Parties of the Seim *while the fascist regime is independent of parliamentary or party combinations.*"

In this respect the fascist régime which is rising in Germany will rather resemble the Polish variety of fascist dictatorship, including the considerable rôle played by the militarists in both countries, each with a marshal at the head. The military fascist dictatorship in Germany which is organically growing out of

the Weimar Republic may be accompanied by the outward forms of parliamentarism, *i.e.*, a certain amount of democratic decorations which will help to carry through the policy of the open deception of the broad masses of the people jointly with the policy of open violence.

Is the complete abolition of Social-Democracy necessary? Evidently not. The whole experience of the development of the fascist system in Poland has refuted the position of the Rights and the Trotskyists on this question, *viz.*, that the fascist dictatorship would mean the death of Social-Democracy. From this they drew the conclusion that Social-Democracy would willy-nilly have to fight against the attacking fascist régime. I think that the capitulation of German Social-Democracy after the so-called Prussian coup has confirmed the falseness of this position. For that matter, the thing is not so simple even in other countries. Take the country of so-called classical fascism—Italy. Even Italian fascism, did not begin with the "liquidation" of Social-Democracy. Or take the Polish variety of the fascist dictatorship. It has restricted itself to occasional fisticuffs with the leaders of Social-Democracy as a method of influencing the opposition.

The German bourgeoisie fully appreciate the important rôle Social-Democracy plays as their chief agent among the working-class. Not long ago I happened to read one of the very characteristic articles in the *Berliner Tageblatt* on the question of which is most valuable for the bourgeoisie—a Social-Democracy which has grown up historically, which is able to retain seven or eight million votes in spite of the fact that it formed the Government, or the petty-bourgeois quicksand on which the national socialists construct their mass positions.

Further, is it necessary to carry through the so-called liquidation of the other bourgeois parties in Germany? I think that it is not. Even the experience of Italy has shown that all kinds of zig-zags and compromises are possible. In Poland we find that national democracy, one of the biggest bourgeois parties, exists side by side with the ruling fascist party. The Pilsudsky gang has not violently liquidated the national democratic opposition; it has restricted itself merely to splitting off parts of it and to a policy of pin-pricks.

In Germany we see the process of disintegration of the old bourgeois parties, the process of their self-abolition and partial absorption by the National Socialist Party. On these grounds a regrouping of party forces is taking place in the bourgeois camp. The party which is most firmly holding the position is the Centre.

What is the main feature in the process of construction of the fascist dictatorship in Germany?

The main thing is the policy of suppressing and destroying the revolutionary organisations and

above all, the C.P. of Germany. The chief thing is the system of government, which is independent of parliamentary and party combinations, the maximum concentration of power and the State apparatus, side by side with a mass fascist party and auxiliary armed bands, such as Mussolini's Fascist Guard or Pildsky's "Strelok," which are intended chiefly for the struggle on the home front. These decisive factors already exist in Germany, but in different proportions, to a different degree and in a different form. First of all the danger of the suppression of the C.P. of Germany and attacks on the revolutionary workers organisations exists already. It is true that even here the process is not taking place in a straight line. Secondly, the President's Government which is independent of parliamentary combinations exists. Parliament has been set aside in fact; although it lost its power long ago and only the mere semblance of a factor of power remained.

The fascist concentration of power is taking place, a clear example of which was the so-called Prussian coup. It is far from complete as yet. But is it a finished process in countries like Poland with its peculiar fascist dictatorship? Not by any means. The fascist Constitution has not been introduced yet; it has been postponed. Complaints are being raised in the fascist camp about the absence of a planned system in the sphere of State construction. Nevertheless, this process has made considerable advances in Poland.

In Germany there is not yet a *direct* combination of the Hitlerite mass basis and the State apparatus, but this basis is rapidly merging with the State apparatus, while the Government has at its command the voluntary armed detachments of the "Steel Helmet." The fact that direct union has not yet taken place makes it considerably easier for Hitler to manoeuvre before the masses, and to maintain the outward semblance of opposition to the Papen-Schleicher Government.

And in Finland, is there not serious friction between that mass basis of fascism, the Lapuas Party, and the present fascist Government?

A struggle for hegemony, for leading posts, is developing between various groups in the fascist camp.

You see, therefore, comrades, how varied and uneven the process of establishing the fascist system and the fascist dictatorship in Germany may be. There are some who always think of the fascist dictatorship as an abstract category, as a sort of classic, ideal fascist system. This is wrong, because such harmonious and complete system exists nowhere. It is fundamentally wrong in the present concrete situation. The German bourgeoisie cannot mechanically imitate the Italian example in the present situation, when the economic crisis and class antagonisms have become so acute and when fascist

dictatorships are showing signs of disintegration. We should always remember that we are dealing with an *attempt* to form a special variety of the fascist dictatorship in Germany *under the conditions of the end of capitalist stabilisation*.

When I spoke of the "dry road" which Social-Democracy laid for the construction of the fascist dictatorship in Germany, I said "comparatively dry road," because in places, for example in Altona, sanguinary mass fights took place even before the Prussian coup, and there cannot be the slightest doubt that generally speaking there can be no such thing as a dry road. These fights will spread to larger and larger masses and will be more and more stubborn.

The further tactics of the present Government for the construction of the fascist dictatorship depend above all on the further growth of the revolutionary upsurge. We have already emphasised that the German proletariat is not broken, but that its forces are growing. But it would be a mistake to close our eyes to the difficulties which are rising before us and also to the fact that recently there have been increased tendencies in the camp of the bourgeoisie towards agreement between the various groups, an instance of which is the compromise arrived at between Hindenburg and the Centre Party.

It would likewise be premature to say that the first attack of fascism has been repulsed, that its further growth has been checked. Only *systematic mass resistance* to the bourgeois offensive, to their State apparatus and the fascist shock-troops, a resistance which will pass to the counter-offensive of the proletarian millions, a resistance that will give rise to wavering among the broad strata of the petty-bourgeoisie and their desertion from fascism, can hasten the disintegration of the broad basis of the fascist camp.

The latest information indicates that this desertion from the fascist camp has already begun. But one swallow does not make a summer, and it is mainly the unemployed who are deserting. The petty-bourgeoisie is not yet swinging in the direction of the revolutionary camp. The main task of the C.P. of Germany is to prevent this partial desertion of the unemployed masses from being intercepted by Social-Democracy, and to divert it to the revolutionary path.

It must be stated that the C.P. of Germany has succeeded in creating a mass fighting anti-fascist front from below. To transfer this movement to the factories and the Labour Exchanges, to develop a wide strike movement, to adopt the weapon of the mass political strike—such are the fundamental tasks of the C.P. of Germany in the present period. We here must put up the strongest opposition to any attempt to shake the leadership of the C.P. of Germany. The tremendous task of fighting against

fascism demands that the correct general line be pursued with complete unanimity, and it demands iron Bolshevik discipline in the Party.

The wide strike movement combined with other acute forms of struggle is now the basic link of the revolutionary upsurge. This link has enabled our Party to pull the whole chain of mass fights, as a factor for accelerating the maturing of the revolutionary crisis.

This approach to the strike movement was adopted by Lenin, who by analysing the strike wave determined what were the "critical turning points in the whole social and political life of a country," because in the statistics of strikes he saw the movement of the class, which determined the general development of events. "The movement of other classes," said Lenin, "is grouped around this centre."

At the XI. Plenum of the E.C.C.I. we spoke chiefly of the strikes in small industry; at the present time, the strike movement has spread, to a more or less extent, to practically all branches of large-scale industry and all the employed sections of the proletariat.

An important feature of the strike wave during the last two years is the shifting of its basis from small and medium industry to large-scale industry.

Expressed in figures this shifting of the base of strikes presents itself as follows: in 1930 there were forty-seven strikers per factory, but in 1931 there were ninety-seven strikers. That is to say, though the number of factories in which strikes took place fell by 5 per cent., the number of strikers increased by 110 per cent. *This is the highest number of strikers per factory for the whole of the last decade.*

Simultaneously with the shifting of the strike wave to large-scale industry, the strike front has extended. Although the number of group strikes, i.e., strikes which affect a number of factories simultaneously, dropped from fifty to thirty-eight in the year 1931, the number of strikers increased from 13,515 in 1930 to 43,717 in 1931, i.e., more than three times as many.

In the first half of 1932 this process became still more intense. During the first half of this year there were 236 strikes with 779,000 strikers, of which 228 were economic strikes affecting about 300,000 workers. *It follows, therefore, that the total number of strikers in the first half of the present year is higher than at any time during the last ten years.* This figure for only half a year comes near to the highest figure for the last ten years, namely, 1923, in the period of inflation. In that year 879,000 workers in 7,451 factories were involved in strikes.

The qualitative change in the strike movement is confirmed by the figures for strikes in various branches of industry for the last half year. Although in 1931 there were fourteen strikes in the mining industry affecting 64,500 workers, in the first half of the current year there were forty strikes and 127,500

strikers. In 1931, there were nine strikes of municipal workers affecting 30,200 workers, but in the first half of the present year there were thirteen strikes affecting 126,160 workers.

As the strike wave rises and the economic crisis becomes more acute, strikes become more stubborn and assume an increasingly acute political character. The first miners' strike lasted only six days but the second one lasted a whole month. The first street car strike lasted two-and-a-half days, the second strike lasted four-and-a-half days, but the strike at Lodz lasted two weeks. In general the duration of strikes has increased several fold. Such examples as the Belgium strike which lasted a month and a half, the Belostok strike which lasted two months and the Petrokov strike which lasted forty days, are of international significance.

Equally eloquent proof of the militant stubbornness of the working-class is provided by the frequent repetition of strikes at various factories and branches of industries (three to eight times in a year).

In connection with this, the proportion of economic strikes to political strikes has changed also. According to incomplete figures given by the R.I.L.U., in the first half of the present year, out of 236 strikes affecting 749,000 workers, there were eleven political strikes in which 470,000 workers took part.

In spite of the growing stubbornness of the strikes, the proportion of unsuccessful strikes has increased. In 1930, the proportion of successful strikes was 69 per cent. and in 1931 it was 73 per cent., but in the first half of the present year the situation changed for the worse. In that period there were 137 successful strikes, but they only affected 130,000 workers, while the forty-four strikes which were lost affected 138,000 workers, and forty-nine strikes ended with indefinite results.

Thus the unsuccessful strikes in the first half of this year included a larger number of workers than the successful ones. *These figures reflect the growing difficulties of strikes.*

The greater success of strikes in 1931 was due to partial, seasonal improvements in the economic situation, while 1932 is the first year since the commencement of the crisis in which there has been no improvement in the economic situation.

A peculiar form of the strike movement is the *seizure of factories*. This is the second basic form of struggle against the capitalist offensive, especially against dismissals. The movement has assumed a mass character and is extending to a number of factories and tens of thousands of workers. Owing to our agitation and above all as a result of their own experience, the workers became convinced that it was not enough to remain passively in the factory, but that it was necessary to get into contact with the workers of other factories and the unemployed and to

carry the struggle beyond the confines of the factory which had been seized.

An example of the seizure of a factory accompanied by the struggle in the streets and sympathy strikes, was given recently by the workers in Pabianitz. While 800 workers occupied the factory, a crowd of 1,000 workers demonstrated and fought stubbornly with the police at the factory gates, after which the struggle was shifted to the territory of the factory.

From this we see how acute was the character of the resistance of the workers, which, in a way, contained the *elements of civil war*. Similar elements were observed in other actions of the working-class. The strike movement, bringing the working masses more and more sharply into conflict with the apparatus of fascist dictatorship, draws them into political life and sets before them the question of power, the question of the revolutionary way out of the crisis.

In spite of the Right-Trotskyist theory that it is impossible to conduct strikes in periods of crises, and in spite of the tremendous unemployment and the brutal fascist terror, the strikes in Poland have proved that the working-class can resist the capitalist offensive, repulse individual attacks by the capitalists, make it difficult for them to carry out their bourgeois method of extricating themselves from the crisis.* This is the most important thing.

What were the weaknesses of our strike practice?

Firstly, the selection of the time of calling strikes, especially in big strikes. Lenin said that we should choose the time irrespective of the will of the employers. The ability to do this is often lacking.

Secondly, there was insufficient concentration of forces in the large, decisive factories.

Thirdly, the decisions adopted in the factories were badly carried out. Sometimes we seem to think that it is enough for the workers to vote for a strike by an overwhelming majority for the strike to break out by itself.

Fourthly, there were cases of misuse of the slogan of the general strike as a slogan of practical action, which distracted attention from partial strikes on the basis of which we can lead the masses to bigger strikes, including general strikes of whole branches of industry. The Leftist use of the bare slogan of the general strike without preliminary preparations and without properly counting the forces, occurred in some of our organisations.

Fifthly, insufficient linking up of strikes with sympathy strikes, insufficient ability to combine and change the forms of struggle, on which point Lenin said:

"Marxist tactics consist of uniting various methods of struggle, of capably passing from one to another, of steadily raising the consciousness of the masses and widening the scope of their

* By forcing down the standard of living of the working class.—*Ed.*

collective activity, which, taken separately, is sometimes offensive and sometimes defensive, but when taken together lead to an increasingly deeper and decisive conflict. *The heightening of the forms of struggle must be a constant tendency.*"

Finally, the inability to end the strike in good time, to lead the masses out of the strike in good order so as to gather forces for a new struggle, and also inability to end a strike by a compromise when it comes up against big difficulties. In these cases the social fascists take the initiative.

Our chief shortcomings in the sphere of organisation lie in that the revolutionary trade unions lag behind the Communist Party in initiative and in the leadership of strikes, in that we work badly in the reformist trade unions though they still have great influence and a comparatively large membership, in that we have not properly utilised and have not waged a *systematic, stubborn struggle* for the factory committees run by the reformists.

Our chief achievement in strike practice is that we have learned to put demands concretely, to combine economic and political demands *in the course of the struggle*, to combine strikes with demonstrations, the organisation of meetings, committees of action, strike committees, delegations as organs of the united front from below, organs for the preparation, development and leadership of strikes.

The necessity of enlarging and sharpening the struggle applies equally to the unemployed movement, the chief weakness of which is the insufficient co-ordination of the remarkably militant actions of the unemployed themselves, and also the insufficient connection between their struggles and the struggles of the employed workers, which creates a danger of scattering the forces of the proletarian army and making it easier for fascism to defeat it in sections.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE MASS REVOLUTIONARY STRIKE.

A characteristic feature of the present period is the growth of economic strikes into political strikes and the close interweaving between economic and political strikes in the *present political situation*. This became most clear in the strike of 40,000 miners during which the masses were all the time in the streets and fought heroically for the streets against detachments of police armed to the teeth.

The chief factor in the development of political strikes is the growth of *big battles* that arose on the basis of partial strikes against the concentrated attack of capital. This was the rôle played by the miners' strike in Dombrov and Cracow. The stubborn struggle of the miners, which lasted a whole month, gave an impetus to vacillating sections of the working-class, roused their resistance to the capitalist offensive, drew them into the strike movement, gave rise to a

number of sympathy strikes and strikes of protest against the bloody violence of the police. On this basis the provincial general protest strike of March 16 broke out, which, in spite of the social-fascists, and thanks to the activity of our Party, assumed the character of a mass revolutionary strike in the chief proletarian centres, affecting a considerable majority of the employed proletariat (over 300,000), including the decisive sections of the working-class who formerly had not been in the strike movement (metal workers, railroad men, munition factories).

The III. Plenum of our Central Committee, held in August last year, foresaw the possibility of such strikes as an *immediate perspective* and took the line of leading the masses of workers to such strikes. In fact, we prepared the ground for this strike; but it was proclaimed by the P.P.S.*

The directives of our Central Committee were as follow: We were to seize upon the date March 16, draw all the sections of the proletariat, especially the railroad workers and metal workers into the strike, lead the masses into the street under our slogans, draw both the employed and the unemployed into demonstrations, expose the democratic phraseology of the P.P.S., set up strike committees everywhere, and keep them intact for the further struggle. Many of these directives were carried out. I will mention only three of the clearest examples. Warsaw—the metal workers' strike was entirely the result of our work. Cracow—in this stronghold of the social-fascists we succeeded in putting the P.P.S. workers against their leaders and organised a mass demonstration. Zhivets—a militant mass demonstration of workers and peasants took place here in spite of the P.P.S. I could quote more examples of a similar kind.

But the chief thing is, that our Party allowed the initiative to slip out of its hands. This disclosed the weakness of our leadership, the under-estimation of the situation and the manoeuvring powers of social-fascism. At that time we wrote:—

"The recent manoeuvres of the P.P.S. (the provincial protest strike of municipal workers and the general strike of March 16), caught our Party unawares. On this occasion the initiative was taken by the P.P.S. and this must be a serious warning for us in the future. *The time is coming when to be twenty-four hours late will mean that events will catch us unawares.* The task is not to expose the social-fascist manoeuvres after the event, but to paralyse these manoeuvres in good time. In this matter we are still weak.

"Of course it is easier for the social-fascists to approach the masses with their legal tentacles. It is easier for them to carry on a peaceful demonstrative strike than for us to develop a mass struggle. But

this cannot justify us in under-estimating the concrete intensity of feeling among the masses *at the present moment* and in being late in taking the initiative. We saw the tremendous importance of our initiative in the miners' strike. Immediately after the attack on social gains, we should have started to prepare for a one-day strike of the working masses over the whole province as a rehearsal for a general revolutionary strike. Then, the political initiative would have been in our hands and our rôle on March 16 would have been much greater."

Thus, a new zone of political strikes is commencing, interwoven with economic strikes.

It is true that this interweaving is still weak, that most of our strikes are still economic strikes, that the number of workers participating in political strikes is still comparatively small. But the main tendency, which was described by Lenin long ago, is making headway and *putting the mass revolutionary strike on the order of the day* as a weapon for the hegemony of the proletariat in the struggle of the millions of toilers.

According to Lenin, political strikes grow, as it were, on the broad basis of economic strikes, and further "at the beginning of the movement, the economic strike plays the predominating rôle in drawing new strata into the movement, while, on the other hand, it rouses and stimulates the backward strata into action, enriches and enlarges the movement, raises it to a higher level" (*Lenin*).

According to this, the Party must develop political strikes on the mass basis of the economic struggle, especially against the bloody violence of the police, against the concrete manifestations of the fascist terror, which is striking more and more strongly at the broad masses of workers and peasants. The political strike can and should be used even now as a weapon of struggle against imperialist war. In the conditions now prevailing, the political strike is the best method of linking up the proletarian movement with the revolutionary peasant and national independence movements.

The wide sweep of the strikes of the proletariat, together with the general sharpening of the political situation, is producing an effect on the millions of toiling peasants. In the rural districts, the strike movement extends primarily to the agricultural proletariat. After dozens of strikes successfully led by the Communists, we organised the one-day demonstrative strike of April 18 in which 100,000 agricultural workers took part.

The broad peasant masses are beginning to resort to the strike weapon. Whole counties are beginning to strike; the peasants refuse to bring their produce to markets until market dues are lowered.

The peasant masses are following the example of the proletariat in passing from scattered actions to big

* Polish Socialist Party—Ed.

battles, which signalises the *acceleration of the maturing of the elements of the agrarian revolution* as part of the proletarian revolution. The revolutionary peasant movement is rising to a higher level, is assuming the character of mass revolts against the exploitation and oppression of the fascist Government and the landlords. This was the character of the armed struggle in Liska which involved nineteen villages and 10,000 peasants.

The mass basis of the revolutionary peasants' movement is becoming wider day after day. The catastrophic agrarian crisis, together with the robbery perpetuated by the moneylenders and tax collectors is not only putting the broad masses of poor peasants into motion, but also the basic masses of middle peasants who are being ruined by debts and taxes. According to the figures of the State Scientific Institute, 90 per cent. of the peasants receive practically no income from the sale of grain; 40 per cent. of their income is swallowed up by taxes and payments in debts. The mass expropriation of the peasants is being carried out by the landlords, the kulaks and the capitalist State. As a result of the fascist land distribution schemes and the abolition of the peasants' right to the use of pastures and woods, the peasants are being deprived of the best lands. The number of peasant farms without horses is steadily increasing.

The economic crisis which is causing the degradation of agriculture, and the predatory fiscal policy of fascism are transforming the survivals of feudalism into a veritable system of robbing the peasant masses. Various forms of exploitation in kind have become more extensive such as working to pay debts and taxes, "sharvark," *i.e.*, forced labour on road-making, etc., which amount to tens of millions of days of compulsory labour every year. Various tolls are being introduced on entry into the towns.

The resistance of the poor and middle peasants to these various forms of plunder reveals a considerable degree of organisation, and is already beginning to develop into spontaneous revolts.

The guiding factor of the peasant movement is land hunger. All the forms of peasant struggle arise out of this question which is *inseparably connected with the question of power*. All the revolutionary actions of the exploited peasants lead to the active struggle for land without compensation. The task of the Communist Party is to seize this main link of the struggle in the countryside and to join it with the everyday struggle and our slogans of action.

Tremendous reserves for the growing proletarian revolution are moving up to the proletariat as its allies in the struggle against the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie. Of course, in the peasant movement there is much more spontaneity than in the proletarian movement. However, in spite of all the

differences in the conditions of the struggle, we may state that the disproportion between the two movements has diminished, that the hegemony of the proletariat has become stronger, that the alliance between the workers and peasants has become a real factor.

The wide sweep of the proletarian strike movement is drawing the masses of urban petty bourgeoisie into the struggle against monopolist capital and the bourgeois State. The population of some towns are resorting to the boycott—the strike against the rise of the cost of electricity. This movement has extended to hundreds of thousands of the urban petty bourgeoisie and is a serious symptom showing that the petty bourgeois masses are deserting the big bourgeoisie and gravitating towards the proletariat.

The strike as a form of struggle is being adopted by thousands of municipal officials who are being robbed by the bourgeois Government and are being ruined by the tactics of the bourgeoisie to pass on the burdens of the financial crisis to them. As a result, the mass basis of the Pilsudsky Party is sharply contracting. Polish fascism is tending to replace the masses by its own reliable cadres. The lower government apparatus is showing signs of disintegration. Symptoms of discontent are observed in the army which is being drawn into the struggle on the home front. Finally, ideological confusion reigns in the ranks of the Pilsudsky Party, a reflection of which is the rise of a group of "National Communists" who advocate planned economy.

It is not because things are going well with Pilsudsky that he is resorting to manoeuvres to retain his influence over the disillusioned elements of the intelligentsia, among whom the influence of Communism is rapidly growing.

Thus, the wide sweep of the proletarian struggle is a *profound shifting of classes*, which is altering the relationship of forces in favour of the revolutionary proletariat. But this process is not taking place in a straight line, without any vacillations and zig-zags. If that had been the case, the revolutionary crisis in Poland would have been an accomplished fact long ago.

The process of the maturing of a revolutionary crisis is very uneven, not only because of the relative weakness of the Communist organisations, but also to a considerable extent because of the growing objective difficulties which the revolutionary movement encounters on its path of development. It is a two-fold dialectical process, the basis of which is the fact that the growing proletarian revolution causes the bourgeois counter-revolution to rally its forces, causes the bourgeoisie, to increase its resistance in spite of their disintegration, mutual antagonisms and internal friction.

THE INTENSIFIED MANOEUVRING OF SOCIAL FASCISM.

Simultaneously the bourgeoisie is trying to perfect and enrich its system of deceit, in order to restrain the process of revolutionisation of the masses, in order to bring these masses into the system of Social-Democratic diversions with the aid of social-fascist tricksters, in order to drive them, under radical-democratic slogans, along the path of the capitalist way out of the crisis.

The manoeuvres of social-fascism and its left sections are becoming more flexible and subtle. Comrade Thälmann has already spoken of them here. It would be mere empty chatter to decide at present on the objective limits of these manoeuvres. As the objective possibilities of manoeuvring diminish and as the new round of wars and revolutions approaches, the manoeuvres of social-fascism will increase and become more "perfect." The extremely flexible strike-breaking tactics of the social-fascists are not only accompanied by anti-capitalist phraseology, but by *anti-reformist phraseology*. And this is something new in their manoeuvres. The P.P.S. leaders are already talking about the overthrow of capitalism. For example, in the resolution passed by the Central Council of the Miners' Union the following passage occurs :

"The idea spread among the working-class that the present crisis can be overcome without the overthrow of capitalism is harmful because it distracts attention from the necessity of fighting against the capitalist system, supports its sickly existence and deepens the poverty of the masses."

The anti-reformist phraseology of the P.P.S. proves most eloquently how utterly bankrupt the former programme for healing capitalism is, in the eyes of the masses. The P.P.S. cannot now come to the masses with its bankrupt slogans of parliamentary democracy in the form of a centre-left Government. It preaches the restoration of democracy, the formation of a "workers' and peasants' government," and advances the slogan of a Polish People's Republic.

The masses of workers and peasants have no desire to return to the Republic of Pilsudsky, Dashinski, Vitos and Co., from which the fascist dictatorship arose. In view of this, the Polish social-fascists, like the German Social-Democrats, shout "Long Live the Second Republic based on 'pure democracy' and 'growth into socialism.'"

With this alleged programme, the Polish social-fascists link up the slogan of planned economy. They note the tremendous popularity of socialist construction in the U.S.S.R. among the masses in Poland and they are compelled in words to recognise its achievements and to put on the mask of objective well-meaning critics. "Our attitude to the Five-Year Plan," say the leaders of the P.P.S., "is without irony or hate. In principle we are in favour of a socialist

planned system, but only without the Soviet system (*Laughter.*), i.e., not on the basis of the serf-like dependence of the masses on the dictatorship, but on the basis of Social-Democracy which is inseparably connected with political democracy." In addition, they try to frighten the masses with the danger that Poland will lose its "independence" if, as they say, "the Five-Year Plan extends to Poland as well" (*Laughter.*)

Recently the social-fascists have also begun to manoeuvre with the slogan "dictatorship of the proletariat."

The sympathy displayed by the toiling masses for the U.S.S.R., their hatred of imperialist war, their readiness to defend the socialist fatherland, and also as a result of the successful anti-war congress campaign (hundreds of meetings were held and resolutions passed, a number of anti-war committees were set up and a provincial conference was held at which delegates from 260 factories, villages, trade unions, mass gatherings of working youth attended, etc.) all this is compelling the social-fascists, in words, to oppose anti-Soviet intervention, which does not prevent them, however, from reviling the anti-war campaign of the Communists and socialist construction in the Soviet Union.

Thanks to these cunning manoeuvres, which sometimes perplex our Party organisations, social-fascism is able to restrain the strivings of the masses towards Communism and retards the disintegration in its own ranks. The rate at which this disintegration is taking place does not correspond to the favourable objective conditions.

The process of disintegration of social-fascism is not so simple as those comrades are inclined to think who over-estimate the "self-exposure" of Social-Democracy and conceive it as a sort of spontaneous process which frees the Communists from the obligation of carrying on persistent and able work to expose it. These comrades usually substitute vulgar phrases for the exposure of the extremely complex manoeuvres of social-fascism and strong language about the social-fascists for strong arguments. Our task is not merely to shake the confidence of the Social-Democratic workers in their leaders, but also to *convince* these workers that we are right, to urge them along the path that will take them away from the leaders and from the *Socialist Party*.

We easily forget that there is a fairly solid difference between the attitude of the Social-Democratic workers to their party, and their attitude towards their party leaders. When a Social-Democratic worker curses his leaders who have gone yellow, he, in his heart of hearts, still believes that Social-Democracy, in itself, is a good party of the workers and only the bad leaders need be changed. This is the sentiment on which the "Left" charlatans play, especially in Poland.

However, our methods of *convincing* the Social-democratic workers are not as good as they should be and still weaker are our efforts to organise the discontent in the P.P.S. The necessary persistence and concentration is lacking in this work. The splitting of individual workers and groups from the P.P.S. takes place without a mass campaign, and does not lead to bigger mass splits in the P.P.S.

Owing to the growing objective difficulties and the manoeuvres in the strike tactics of social-fascism, which has the monopoly of legality, our struggle for the leadership of the strike movement becomes much more difficult.

These difficulties affect the proportion between the strikes led entirely by the Red Trade Union Opposition and those in which a stubborn fight for the leadership has occurred. Whereas in 1931 we led 50 per cent. of the strikes and the strikers involved, in the first half of 1932 the R.T.U.O. led 159 economic strikes affecting 206,000 workers, while the reformists led twenty-three strikes affecting 130,000 workers, including the one-day protest strike of 60,000 municipal employees; while in twelve strikes affecting 67,000 workers, we carried on a struggle against the reformists for the leadership. These figures show that the R.T.U.O. had unchallenged leadership of the strikes which occurred mainly in medium and small industry.

This is why the process of disintegration of the social-fascist parties is slower than the general radicalisation of the masses. With the help of flexible manoeuvres, social-fascism not only succeeds in reducing the rate at which the workers are deserting Social-Democracy, but here and there it is able to intercept elements who are deserting other parties and to prevent the further progress of these elements towards Communism.

There are also zig-zags in the contraction of the mass basis of social-fascism which is taking place in the chief proletarian centres. *Our task is to accelerate the collapse of Social-Democracy by the competent, systematic, persistent, exposure of social-fascism, especially on the basis of the experience of the everyday struggle.*

The wide masses are already following the revolutionary vanguard, the Communist Party. In the course of the everyday struggle, the Communist Party of Poland has made great advances along the path of winning the majority of the proletariat and the basic masses of the peasants. The acceleration of the maturing of the revolutionary crisis in Poland requires that the Party should concentrate all its efforts upon the rapid fulfilment of the main strategic task of the present period. This task can be fulfilled only in the course of a consistent and persistent struggle against social-fascism and national-fascism.

TOWARDS DECISIVE STRUGGLES FOR POWER.

I want to make a few remarks on the question of the *general strike*.

In organising partial strikes, the Party never dropped into Economism, never lost sight of revolutionary perspectives.

The Party linked up the policy of extending the strike front with the policy of *steering a course for the general strike*. The general protest strike of March 16 roused tremendous enthusiasm among the masses for the slogan of the revolutionary general strike. Of course, it would be a kind of Economism to regard such a strike as the mechanical continuation of partial strikes, as the normal sum of partial strikes.

It is clear that such a strike requires a suitable sharpening of the whole political situation and a high level of revolutionary activity on the part of the broad masses. The path towards such a strike leads through the further extension of the strike front, especially among the decisive sections of the proletariat—the metal workers and railwaymen—through an extensive interweaving of economic and political strikes, through street demonstrations, through the co-ordination of the actions of the unemployed, through big united fights and partial revolts in the rural districts.

The popularisation of the slogan of the general strike must be linked up with the prospects of the direct struggle for power, with the propaganda of armed rebellion. This does not mean that every such strike will automatically and immediately develop into an armed rebellion. A general revolutionary strike is possible even when the situation has not yet matured for a revolutionary uprising, which does not spring automatically out of a general strike, but is the result of a whole series of big class battles. We learn this from the experience of 1905 revolution. Lenin put the question of the general strike in the same way. The directive which applies most of all to every circumstance can be found in the resolution on strikes passed by the Central Committee of the Bolsheviks in 1913 (when the revolutionary tide had reached a higher level than it is at in Poland now) approximating most closely to the present situation. In this resolution we read:

“The meeting welcomes the initiative of the St. Petersburg Committee and a number of Party groups in Moscow which raised the question of the general political strike and took steps in this direction in June-September this year. The meeting recognises that the movement is approaching the time when an All-Russian political strike will be on the order of the day. Systematic political agitation for this strike should commence everywhere immediately.”

This presentation of the question of the general strike excludes the linking up of this strike with

armed rebellion, automatically, when the objective situation is not ripe for it.

On March 16, certain comrades in Poland wanted to advance the slogan: "Long live the general strike to complete victory." Such a slogan would have simply hung in the air; it would have remained merely a paper slogan.

It is difficult to foresee what the concrete process by which the general revolutionary strike will develop into a direct struggle for power will be like. But even at the present time, these perspectives must give a political direction to all partial struggles. We must remember that in the conditions of a revolutionary crisis, the general strike under our leadership brings the masses point blank up against the task of the direct struggle for power and brings the Party up against the task of organising the forces for the armed rebellion.

While taking the line of leading the masses to the general revolutionary strike, we must even now reckon with the possibility of every big strike developing into a short general protest strike. Bearing the experience of March 16 in mind, we must always be ready to take the initiative without delay and to lead this strike from the very start.

In this respect, the example of March 16 undoubtedly is of international importance. Similar strikes have taken place in Hungary and Greece. They are symptoms of the maturing of the conditions for a general revolutionary strike in those countries which are approaching closest of all to a revolutionary crisis.

It is quite plain that a general revolutionary strike represents a component part of our revolutionary strategy in its concrete operation. The rôle of this strike in various countries may differ. In countries like Poland and Italy, the general revolutionary strike may be a means of bringing about a big break in the chain of the fascist dictatorship, cause millions to come out in the streets, and serve as a means of uniting the scattered sections of the proletariat as the revolutionary class, a means for strengthening its hegemony and a test of the relationships of class forces before the general engagement.

In his book on Germany, Trotsky opposes the slogan of the general strike. He says:

"It would only become necessary to fight against fascism in Germany by means of the general strike if fascism was already in power and was in firm control of the apparatus of the State . . . If in Germany the struggle breaks out as a result of partial clashes caused by the provocation of the fascists, the call for a general strike will hardly suit the circumstances. A general strike would mean, above all, the separation of town from town, section from section, and even factory from factory." (Laughter.)

"It is more difficult to find and gather together

workers who are not at work . . . Under these conditions, the fascists, who are not short of staff officers, may obtain a certain superiority of force owing to their central leadership."

In the opinion of Trotsky, the question of a general strike can only rise when fascism is firmly in control of the apparatus of the Government. This completely expresses the rank opportunism of the Trotskyist position.

(MARTINOV: "It is not a mistake but a calculation.")

The draft political theses correctly set the C.P. of Germany the task of "leading the masses to the general political strike" by "developing economic and political strikes" as one of the central tasks of the present moment. It seems to me that the same tasks must be set the C.P. of Poland and other countries such as Spain, where the development of economic and political strikes has moved furthest ahead.

The comrades who think that the task of popularising the slogan of the general strike and the task of leading the masses up to the general strike is a premature task, are clearly under-estimating the situation in an opportunist manner and are belittling our tasks. They do not understand the character of such a big preventive manoeuvre of social-fascism as the proclamation of the strike on March 16th in Poland. To fail to understand that such manoeuvres are called forth by the rapid maturing of the revolutionary crisis means failure to see the qualitative changes in the whole situation and the immediate revolutionary perspectives.

Thus we see that the wide strike movement is the main link in the revolutionary upsurge in all capitalist countries.

The fact that the strike movement is weak in Germany does not contradict the general line of development. This weakness is one of the signs that the subjective factor is lagging behind the objective conditions. It is true that the development of strikes in Germany encounters special difficulties (the tremendous power of the reformist trade unions and the Social-Democrats, the fact that the capitalist offensive is conducted directly by the capitalist State, widespread unemployment, the pressure of nationalist ideology caused by the fetters of the Versailles Treaty, etc.). However, the unceasing capitalist offensive undoubtedly strengthens the sentiments for resistance among the working masses. The development of strikes among the German proletariat depends on the forms of work, the forms of the organisational contacts of the Party and the R.T.U.O.

The chief difference between the *practice* of the Communist Party of Poland and the Communist Party of Germany—I am not speaking about the line—is that while the Polish Communists, when preparing to resist the capitalist offensive along a wide front, right from the start organised the struggle

in the various factories, the German Communists, when preparing for the fights, did not, in a number of cases, pay sufficient attention to partial strikes in reply to every actual attack of the capitalists. While the Polish Communists exerted every effort to make the workers affected understand the necessity for the strike, the German Communists, in spite of the line of the Party leaders, sometimes attempted to call for strikes by word of command; the decisions to call strikes were not voted on in the factories and at conferences of factory delegates, but at conferences which had no connection with the factories, and they did not attempt at first to rally the workers by means of preliminary meetings and mass factory meetings. We are not speaking here of individual good examples of strike practice in Germany. The insufficiency of persistent preparatory work, the failure to concentrate forces on the decisive factories, the attempts to act from above instead of widely mobilising the masses from below, were bound to restrict the scope of the strikes in Germany. The absence of *systematic* resistance by the working masses made it easier for the German bourgeoisie to introduce a number of "emergency decrees" backed by the whole apparatus of the bourgeois State. The strike wave in Poland, however, hindered the Pilsudsky Government from following the German example. The Pilsudsky Government was compelled temporarily to withdraw its first attempt to abolish social insurance by the mere threat of a general protest strike. But this manoeuvre did not after all help the Government to avert the strike.

We do not mean to assert that strikes must everywhere play the same rôle as in Poland. In view of the present degree of political development of millions of the German proletariat who have been drawn into the vortex of the political struggle by the home and foreign situation of Germany, by the acute economic crisis, by growing political oppression, by the partial political crises among the ruling classes, the strike movement may not play such a big rôle in comparison with other forms of the political struggle as it does in Poland. The heroic example of physical mass resistance to fascist gangs, as in Altona, is one that other countries should follow. But by rousing the consciousness among the workers, political battles will stimulate the strike struggle of the working masses against the economic offensive of capital. On the other hand, economic strikes give rise to political strikes. Under the influence of these two factors, mass political strikes will rise to the point of the general revolutionary strike, the noble traditions of which live among the German proletariat.

Taken on the whole, the general line of development of the revolutionary upsurge in Germany is the same as in Poland—not an automatic leap to decisive battles for power but an accelerated approach to them

in the course of varied everyday fights (the systematic resistance to the terror of fascist gangs, economic and political strikes, demonstrations, etc.). In order to leap forward we must first take a run. And the proletariat can take this run only in the persistent everyday struggle. The poor leadership of this struggle was the cause of the weakness of the Party on July 20.

The best method of bringing about the revolutionary mobilisation of the masses is still the tactic of the united front from below. Comrade Kuusinen set out plainly and clearly the basic methods of this tactic in our work in the future. In spite of the various mistakes committed by the Communist Party of Germany, it has recently shown examples of Bolshevik application of this tactic, which must serve as lessons for other sections of the Comintern.

Only the broad united front, the starting point of which is the spontaneous striving of the masses towards unity in the struggle against the capitalist offensive and fascism, can serve as the lever to put into motion millions of the proletariat. Only the tactic of the united front, free from illusions concerning social-fascism, free from the capitulation of the Rights and the belittling of our independent leading rôle, and free from "Left" domineering over the masses, will enable us to win over the masses who are following the Social-Democrats, to counteract the influence of Social-Democracy among the proletariat and finally defeat it.

The united front as a method of mobilising the working masses *for the revolutionary struggle* has nothing in common with the policy of coaxing the Social-Democratic leaders, which is based on the opportunist view that Social-Democracy is ceasing to be the chief social bulwark of the bourgeoisie in the working-class.

I will read two quotations from the factional platform of our Right hypocrites which is being distributed in the country at present: "Monopolistic capital and fascism are our chief and most important enemies at the present stage of the development of class battles in Poland. As the revolutionary situation matures in Poland and we win over the majority of the working-class for the slogan of the dictatorship of the proletariat, our chief enemy will become the P.P.S." In other words, at present it is not the chief enemy in the working-class.

"The bankruptcy of the tactic of the united front which has been employed hitherto has caused a spontaneous reaction among the Party masses in the direction of the Leninist united front." And further: "The terror used against the leaders of the 'Central Left' (i.e., towards the leaders of the P.P.S. and the peasant kulak parties during the Brest trial), and particularly against the leaders of the P.P.S., or, to use the terminology of Lenin, towards the representatives of the democratic petty bourgeoisie, was

the expression of the sharp conflict in the camp of the bourgeoisie. According to Lenin, in order that our Party may become the leader of the masses, it should have taken advantage of this conflict to split away the masses which still follow the Central Left. How should we act? According to Lenin's directions, *We should agree to compromises, manoeuvres, agreements and zig-zags . . . with temporary and unstable allies.*"

The essence of these Trotskyist ideas is clear, namely: the Comintern tactic of the united front is "bankrupt." What we need is a united front with the representatives of "petty bourgeois democracy" which can be "pushed" along the path of revolutionary struggle.

The tendency to go part of the way with Social-Democracy, to replace the united front from below by a united front with the Social-Democratic leaders, is now the chief right danger. This tendency, like the sectarian attitude toward Social-Democratic and non-party workers, leads to our separation from the masses.

One of the typical Leftist mistakes committed in the work of the united front, not only in Poland but in other sections also, is the demand that Social-Democratic rank and file workers, should immediately display complete revolutionary maturity, the demand for immediate splits from the Party and the acceptance of all Communist slogans. Instead of leading by issuing decrees, we must show our ability to lead from below, boldly put Social-Democratic workers on to the leading united front bodies. The Leftist fear of these workers at conferences, in strike committees, etc., leads to isolation from the Social-Democratic masses. We must bring into the united front those Social-Democratic delegates who are prepared to fight together with us in spite of their leaders, but we must take care not to have any illusions about Social-Democratic delegates who carry out the instruction of their leaders.

We must not mechanically transfer the extension of the scope of the united front in Germany, which is called forth by a special situation, to other sections, irrespective of the concrete methods of manoeuvring employed by the Social-Democrats, irrespective of the position Social-Democracy occupies in the apparatus of government, irrespective of the relation of forces between us and the Social-Democrats, and irrespective of the degree of disintegration among their rank and file.

What is the difference between political conditions of Germany compared with those of Poland which call for different methods of applying the united front? First of all, the difference in the line of development of fascism. In Germany, until recently, this line indicated a rising curve; in Poland it indicates a declining curve. On the eve of the declaration of martial law in Berlin, we wrote that as

German fascism has only a short historic period of time at its disposal, it is trying to destroy, not only the Communist organisations, but also, in passing, the other workers' organisations, and even certain Social-Democratic trade unions. There can be no doubt that finance capital still regards Social-Democracy as its furthest outpost among the masses against revolution. Therefore it is not in its interests to destroy Social-Democracy; whereas the C.P. of Germany is threatened with suppression at any moment. But the counter-revolutionary sweep of the enormous army of Hitler, which is now intended for the home front, the logic of the intense class struggle, the desire to paralyse the whole working-class, and particularly against Communism, are sometimes turned against the mass organisations of the workers who follow the Social-Democrats. In Poland, after the unsuccessful attempts to create direct mass transmission belts for the fascist dictatorship and after the beating up at Brest, the P.P.S. became a recognised part of the fascist system. The fascist terror now strikes chiefly at the rank and file P.P.S. workers who have violated Social-Democratic discipline. In Poland, now that fascism is bankrupt, social-fascism is acting in the rôle of the saviour of capitalism; but in Germany, fascism is acting as the saviour of capitalism, while the Social-Democratic-Centre coalition is bankrupt. In Poland, the illegal position of the Communist Party helps the social-fascist leaders to deceive the masses by hindering the work of the Communists to expose them.

Hence it follows that in its tactical methods the Communist Party of Poland must observe the greatest caution, and apply the tactic of the united front towards the lower links of the P.P.S.—to the factory committees and to the oppositionally inclined branches of the reformist trade unions, and protect the P.P.S. workers against the blows of the fascist terror. In our present concrete conditions, it is not advisable to appeal to the P.P.S. Party organisations. This would only serve to raise the prestige of the P.P.S.

I wish to make a few remarks about our *slogans*. The draft of the Political Theses correctly emphasises the necessity for "central slogans of action which through the whole period, must be steadily inculcated among the masses with special insistence." The question is about two categories of slogans—partial slogans which lead the masses up to the direct struggle for power; and central, strategic slogans. These slogans must be so formulated that they will be understood by the broad masses, by the millions of workers and peasants, and not only by the revolutionary vanguard. The strength of Bolshevism has always been the ability to put forward promptly the slogans which arise from the concrete situation, which are seized upon by millions of toilers and which put them into motion. Such a rôle was played by the

slogan: "Down with the Ten Capitalist Ministers," "All Power to the Soviets," etc.*

At the III. Plenum of our Central Committee we specially considered this question in connection with the general estimate of the situation and in defining the immediate outlook. The Plenum drew up a platform of sharp partial slogans which *corresponded to the level of the revolutionary upsurge* in Poland, which, as the resolution states, "will bring the masses into direct conflict with the fascist Government apparatus, set before them the question of power and make it easier to pass to higher forms of struggle." These slogans unite all the forms of struggle, often spontaneous, against taxes, against the fascist terror, for the liberation of prisoners, for the disarming of the police and fascist gangs and for the withdrawal of Polish occupational troops from West Ukraine and White Russia, slogans of struggle such as the seizure of food, and the unauthorised use of pastures and forests. Around all these questions, struggles are already developing. It becomes more and more imperative to systematically put forward slogans which correspond to the circumstances of the sharpening of the economic crisis, the tremendous poverty of the masses and the aggressiveness which is growing among them, as the conditions for carrying them out become ripe. The most popular slogan among the masses has become "Not a cent for the government of starvation, terror and war," a slogan which unites the struggle of millions of workers and peasants against the fascist regime.

In the sphere of central strategic slogans, the thesis on the report of Comrade Kuusinen lays before the C.P. of Poland the task of "explaining to the masses the revolutionary way out of the crisis by popularising the propaganda of (1) the Soviet system, which offers genuine democracy for all the toilers, (2) the confiscation of big capitalist enterprises by the Soviet State, (3) the confiscation of the land of the landlords with the aim of giving them to the very small peasants, the village poor and the farm labourers." It seems to me that these formulations should be made more exact. The most important thing is to have a very distinct definition of the slogan of power which determines the character of our revolution, which represents the dividing line between the camp of the proletarian revolution and the bourgeois counter-revolution, between Communism on the one hand and fascism, and social-fascism on the other. The popularising of the Soviet system naturally implies carrying on propaganda in favour of the dictatorship of the proletariat. The formulation of the slogan must include the element of the Soviet power as the

only form of workers' democracy, *i.e.*, the element which is the definite contrast of the slogan of so-called democracy and the workers' and peasants' Government which is advocated by the social-fascists. This formulation should read as follows: "Long live the workers' and peasants' Government—the Government of Soviets, of Workers', Peasants' and Soldiers' Deputies!"

Our programme for a revolutionary way out of the crisis must impress on the minds of the masses that the only way out for them is the dictatorship of the proletariat, the Polish Soviet Republic. We must systematically expose the falsity of the social-fascist talk about a democratic way out of the crisis and show that it is the synonym for the capitalist way out, a means of concealing the attempts of the bourgeoisie to throw the burdens of the crisis on to the toilers.

Finally, I come to the question of *perspectives*.

The draft political theses, pointing out the "peculiar swaying of antagonist forces, taking place rapidly in one place, slower in another" correctly emphasises that "in extremely important key points, the antagonistic forces are already being released for the struggle." This general formula must be made more concrete, must be adapted to the conditions of the rapid maturing of the revolutionary crisis in countries like Germany and Poland. We must remember the words of Comrade Stalin that there is no insurmountable barrier between the revolutionary upsurge, the revolutionary crisis and the revolutionary situation, that one phase imperceptibly passes into the other. The whole point is to make sure of this transition and not to be caught unawares.

In Poland, extensive breaches may even now be made in the fascist regime, there may be big proletarian battles and mass outbreaks among the peasants, which will grow into a revolutionary crisis.

The Polish bourgeoisie will realise this. One of the bourgeois papers wrote as follows:

"Everywhere we hear only what will happen to-morrow. Everyone has the feeling that we are standing at the edge of a precipice. Under such conditions, a small event may play a decisive rôle. Events may happen which the supporters of order will not be able to control."

Of course, the power of the bourgeoisie, to use the words of Lenin: "will not fall unless it is pushed over." The bourgeoisie understand the dynamics of the sometimes spasmodic development of antagonistic forces for decisive conflicts. They are preparing intensively for them. *We are sure that the XII. Plenum of the E.C.C.I. will considerably advance our preparations for the decisive struggles for power, for the dictatorship of the proletariat.*

* In Russia, after the February Revolution—Ed.

XII PLENUM OF THE I.C.C.I.

12th Day, 22nd Session, Morning, September 8, 1932.

Speaker: JACK PRINGLE.

COMRADE Kuusinen in his report and thesis very correctly points out that the relative stabilisation of capitalism has come to an end. Comrade Stalin in his political report to the XV Congress of the C.P.S.U. predicted this, he declared:

"Out of the partial stabilisation of capitalism there grows a still acuter crisis, the growing crisis destroys the stabilisation—these are the dialectics of the development of capitalism in the present historical moment."

In the United States the correctness of Comrade Stalin's statement is brought out by the following: During the last three years all activities in the country have dropped 51 per cent. According to bourgeois figures, comparing the average for June, 1929, with June, 1932, industrial production has decreased to 48.7 per cent., automobile production to 42.7 per cent., car-loading to 48.2 per cent., department store sales to 60.7 per cent., and steel production as low as to 19.8 per cent., while industrial employment dropped to 57.7 per cent. These figures indicate the general trend in the economic life of the country. Actually the situation is even worse. Added to this, the financial crisis, which has begun, and is shown in the government deficit of 3 billion dollars, the Finance Reconstruction Corporation, that pours 4 billion dollars into the big banks, R.R. and big corporations and finally the Glass Bill, which opens inflation. *The gold standard of the American dollar is in danger.*

In previous crises, the ordinary cyclical crises, when there was no relatively high monopolistic character, American capitalism's return to a new cycle was accomplished through the increase and renewal of basic capital, machinery, technique. In the present crisis such attempts were made only in chemical and war industries. In all industries, including war, the capitalists are increasing speed-up tremendously, lowering the wages of the working class, as the only means of cheapening expenditure of production. The total payroll of the workers in three years declined 61.9 per cent.

Because of the highly monopolistic character of American capitalism, through which they are able to buy and sell at their own monopoly controlled prices, the colonies are robbed of their raw materials, the farmers in the home country of their products, and the workers and farmers through the relatively high selling prices of the commodities.

The huge number of bank failures (over two thousand in 1931, around 500 in the first two months of 1932) wipes out the savings of large sections of the workers and farmers, and the petty-bourgeoisie, high taxes destroying the farmers and the petty-bourgeoisie.

The deepening and the broadening of the crisis has placed tremendous burdens on the toiling masses of America, has served to smash the prosperity illusions, the faith in American capitalism which existed during the period of relative stabilisation, that the Social-Fascists and the A.F. of L. use; delivered a smashing blow to the theory of American exceptionalism, developed by the renegades, Lovestone and Pepper.

The American bourgeoisie is putting the burden of the crisis on the backs of the toiling masses, has cut the wages of the workers to approximately 50 per cent. in all industries during the last three years, 15,000,000 are unemployed and about 10,000,000 working two or three days per week. The "stagger" system* becomes a national policy of the Hoover Hunger and War Government. The hardest hit are the Negro masses and particularly the Negro workers. They are the first to lose their jobs, and have their wages cut. The much-vaunted "independent American Farmer" is now becoming a pauperised peasant.

The working class and the toiling masses are arising against the offensive of the bourgeoisie. The economic struggles against the offensive of the bourgeoisie, are becoming an offensive struggle, and are carrying in it, political elements against the bourgeois system in its entirety. The number of strikes, and the militancy of the strikers in them, has increased. This can be shown by the heroic struggle of the 40,000 miners of Western Pennsylvania, in which our Party and the National Miners' Union played the leading rôle; by strikes in the textile industry, needle trades, shoe, food, agricultural workers (best workers in Colorado) and isolated strikes in the steel industry in Warren, Ohio, led by our industrial union, etc.

Also by the National Hunger March to Washington, which involves hundreds of thousands of workers all over the country, State Hunger Marches to legislative bodies, bread strikes and street struggles, between the unemployed and

*The system of organising shifts or turns of employment, i.e., a system of organised short time.

the police, in such large industrial cities as Chicago, St. Louis, Detroit, Cleveland, New York, etc. Anti-war demonstrations in Washington, Chicago, Seattle, huge mass demonstrations on May 1st. And recently in San Francisco, a demonstration of 1,000 workers against shipping of ammunition to Japan. One of the most important characteristics of these struggles is that we see unity of the Negro and white workers, unemployed and employed in action and struggle. A march of war veterans to Washington involving 25,000 ex-soldiers, showed a revolutionary character, which was inspired by the National Hunger March in December. The war veterans were composed of unemployed workers, pauperised farmers and bankrupt petty-bourgeois elements. Although this march had all the characteristics of a spontaneous mass movement, the Party played a definite rôle in organising and leading the ex-servicemen. Republican Congressman, Hamilton Fish, chief red-baiter, declared: "The veterans' march to Washington, from the big industrial centres such as Detroit, Chicago, Cleveland, Pittsburgh, New York, Philadelphia was inspired largely by the Workers' Ex-Servicemen's League."

In the North-Western States farmers are rising in masses, and conducting militant struggles by methods of strikes, demanding higher prices for their commodities. They are stopping trains and trucks containing food. This is, objectively, a revolutionary movement of the farmers, against the robber policy of low monopoly buying prices, that should, and has to be, supported by the Party and the working class. In addition to this movement of the masses, we see the movement among the teachers, as in the case of Chicago, they are organising marches and demonstrations demanding back pay, which has not been paid for 10 to 12 months; strikes of the tax-payers refusing to pay high taxes; movements of depositors of the closed bankrupt banks, etc.

All these movements among the masses show the revolutionary upsurge, and the tremendously favourable objective conditions, for broadening the organisation of the masses, on a basis of the united front from below, in the struggle for their daily needs and demands; for mass unemployed councils, red trade unions in the shops, and opposition movements inside the reformist unions.

These favourable conditions show the great mass movement, and the possibility of developing it to a higher stage. Up till now, our Party has not been fully successful in achieving these aims. Why? *Primarily because of its narrow sectarian approach to the masses, its isolation from the masses.* This is clearly demonstrated

in our participation and leadership of some of the outstanding movements and struggles of the masses. For instance, the National Convention of the Red National Miners' Union, which was held on the eve of a new wave of mass strikes of the miners, not only did not make preparations for coming struggles, but did not even sense the coming struggles. In the veterans' march on Washington, the majority of the Pol-Bureau voted against the mass march on Washington, and under-estimated the readiness of the masses to struggle by this, and proposed a sectarian measure instead—a delegation from a few industrial cities, as a substitute for the mass revolutionary movement.

During the veterans' march, the Party did not understand the character and composition of the marchers, and made appeals only to the workers, in the march. This prevented the mass mobilisation of support for the marchers by the broad masses, farmers, etc., and gaining the leading rôle in the march.

Our central organ, the "Daily Worker," interpreted the veterans' march in a different manner every day—one day it declared we are friends of the marchers, and the next day it declared, we support the movement of the workers' Ex-Servicemen's League.

The effect of the crushing burden of the crisis was felt most acutely by the Negro masses. The bourgeoisie have increased all forms of national oppression, increase of terror, lynching, as well as intensifying attempts to isolate the Negro masses from the white workers, and by the strengthening of Jim Crow segregation, etc. This situation places the necessity of strengthening our fight against increased oppression of the Negro masses more sharply before our Party, and especially of developing a systematic struggle against all remnants of white chauvinism, both in the ranks of the Party, and among the masses. Although our Party can show some success in the field of work among the Negro masses—Scottsboro, Camp Hill, struggles of the unemployed in Chicago, Yekenin trial, etc., we are still isolated from the broad masses of Negroes. For example, in the present election campaign, our Party has nominated a Negro candidate for vice-president. This fact caused a big stir among the Negro masses. How did our Party utilise the good response of the Negro masses to the Communist candidate? We have mostly confined our campaign to agitational speeches, and have not as yet connected the everyday struggles of the Negro masses in the South and North with our election campaign struggle. Although one of our central slogans in the election is "*equal rights for Negroes, and the right to self-deter-*

mination in the black belt," we have not developed concrete struggles around this central slogan. However, wherever attempts were made, as, for instance, in the 1st Congressional District in Chicago, where Comrade Newton, a Negro comrade, is a candidate against De Priest, a Negro Republican, we were able to get support from the Negro masses. 8,000 Negro workers participated in a demonstration against De Priest under our leadership. We have a first beginning of the struggle against Negro reformism in Chicago.

The majority of the Negro proletariat is entirely unorganised. The American Federation of Labour has refused to admit Negro workers into the trade unions for years, and in places where they were forced to organise the Negroes, they built Jim Crow Locals. The immediate task confronting the Party is to develop the struggle in the South among the Negro masses, to mobilise the white and Negro proletariat in the North, to support and to lead the struggle around the central demand and to make a special effort to draw the Negro proletariat into the Trade Unions, Unemployed Councils, etc. And finally to develop Negro cadres and leadership in the mass organisations. What is true of our secretarian approach to the central demand for "Negro rights and the right to self-determination," is also true of our slogan "Against Hoover Wage-Cuts" and for "Unemployed Insurance." Our Party does not concretely apply these slogans to the daily concrete situation, in the shops, and among the unemployed, and does not mobilise on the basis of united front action. For these reasons our election campaign is not embracing the wide masses.

Under the pressure of the growing radicalisation of the masses, the reactionary leadership of the A.F. of L., the Musteites, the Socialist Party, etc., are driven to more and more "left" manoeuvres, and they have also increased their activities among the masses because of our weaknesses. Whereas the officials declared a year and half ago at the Vancouver Convention of the A.F. of L.:

"It is the opinion of the Executive Council, that compulsory unemployment insurance legislation, such as is now in effect in Great Britain, and Germany, would not be suitable to our economic and political requirements here, and unsatisfactory to American working men and women."

Recently at an Executive Council of the A.F. of L. in Atlantic City, these same bureaucrats declared:

"If relief is not provided, men and women will be forced to return to the primitive ways

of getting food for themselves, and their children. People do not starve by tens of millions, when they see plenty around them."

The Socialist Party is likewise engaged in zig-zag "left" manoeuvres. Paul Blanchard, one of the leaders of the "left wing" of the Socialist Party writes:

"Thomas moved definitely to the left in the Milwaukee Convention and the majority of the Party moved with him. The Party elected a more vigorous National Executive Committee, it adopted a more friendly policy toward the U.S.S.R., and it laid the ground work for more militant activity in the labour field by appointing field organisers for important industrial areas."

The Muste group, which in the year of 1931 led one-third of the strikes, is especially dangerous in this situation. The Muste Group originated as a progressive opposition group inside the A.F. of L., and later undertook independent leadership in strike struggles, and is now entering the political arena, trying to become a nucleus for a sort of American Independent Labour Party. The Muste Group have entered the field of the unemployed work and organised Unemployed Citizens' Leagues in a number of cities. They organised large numbers of unemployed in the city of Seattle in the State of Washington. This movement is spreading to other cities on the basis of "self-help of the unemployed," thereby removing the burden of relief from the government — a typical class-collaboration scheme. On the political field it supports the Independent Labour Party in West Virginia, and the Farmer-Labour Party in Chicago; while in Seattle and Tacoma, Washington, it is putting up independent local candidates. There is also a flood of capitalist demagogy.

Our Party was unable to successfully and concretely expose and defeat these enemies in the ranks of the working class, in the everyday struggles. While attacking the hypocrisy, demagogy and betrayals of the Social-Fascist leaders mercilessly, we must patiently persuade and convince workers who are still following the Social-Fascist, Muste, in a comradely way, especially in the unions of the A.F. of L. of the correctness of our position, on the basis of common united front struggles, especially in the shops against the capitalist offensive.

Comrade Knorin spoke here of the necessity of co-ordinating the struggles of the workers, on the streets, with their struggles in the shops and leading them to a higher political level. We have yet to learn this in the United States. In connection with this I want to deal now with the

strikes of 35,000 miners in Illinois and 10,000 in Indiana.

On April 1st, 1932, the coal barons in Illinois and Indiana closed the mines to force a wage reduction, and introduce rationalisation schemes. The bureaucrats of the United Mine Workers' Union of America signed an agreement, with the coal barons, to accept a wage-cut from £6 10s. to £5 a day. The miners rejected this agreement twice by ballot in referendum, although they had already starved for five months. When the bureaucrats declared that the agreement would be enforced and the mines would open on this basis, the miners responded with *mass strikes*, involving 35,000 of the 50,000 miners employed in Illinois. Our Party and the rank-and-file opposition movement developed a wide campaign against the wage-cut agreement and against the bureaucrats. How the miners greeted our programme of struggle is best shown in the following facts: John Walker, Illinois District President of the U.M.W.A., who came to speak for a wage-cut in Johnson City, was met by miners and their wives with stones, and driven out of town. A sub-district president, Edmondson, addressing a meeting in Royalton, was beaten by the miners and taken to hospital, while the speakers of the rank and file committee were enthusiastically greeted wherever they appeared to speak.

Although the present strike is not under the leadership of our Party and the rank and file opposition, we are a serious factor there. At a conference in Donald, called by the Mustéites and local bureaucrats, our proposals were rejected, but on the same day, in the same town, *ten thousand miners voted unanimously for our programme*. In Bellville, at a conference of representatives from 28 branches of the reformist unions, a committee of action of 15 was elected and a Communist elected chairman of this committee. In the present situation, in the strike, the main task confronting us is to set up *broad rank and file strike committees in every mine*. We must take over the leadership of the strikers, and consolidate the strike, uniting the struggle of the employed and unemployed miners and their families, against wage-cuts, for immediate relief of the unemployed, and lead it to a higher stage, giving a definite political character to the situation. To consolidate the strike organisationally, and lead it successfully to victory, it is necessary to extend the strike to the mines still working. This is now taking place in Illinois, where 20,000 miners marched on Franklin County where the miners are still working. They clashed with the police. Over 100 miners were wounded in the

battle with the police. Six aeroplanes brought national guards to the strike area. There is a small civil war going on at this moment in the Illinois coal fields. Two miners have been killed on the picket lines. These struggles of the miners are of tremendous importance. It shows the growing militancy and revolutionary upsurge of the masses. It proves again that the emphasis placed on work in the reformist unions by the Plenum can be successfully applied if the correct united front tactic is utilised.

In Indiana, we have a similar situation, where an equally militant struggle is carried on by the miners. In these struggles, our Party is bringing forward the election campaign, and exposing the rôle of the state and local government. One of the leaders of the miners' strike in Illinois, is a Communist candidate for lieutenant-governor of Illinois. However, in the wage-cuts in the steel, railroad, stockyards and other industries in Chicago district, the Party was unable to mobilise the masses for the struggle. This is explained by our isolation from the big shops, our sectarian approach to the masses, a lack of understanding of the concrete conditions of the workers in the shops, and of personal daily contact with the workers. It is in the big shops, where we are weakest, where we have not made contact with any large group of workers. To acknowledge this shortcoming is not sufficient. We must change this, and the whole Party, must turn its major activities to the big shops. It is essential for us to strengthen our work in the reformist unions, *yet the main task of the district is to organise Red unions among the unorganised workers in steel, stockyards, etc., who form the greatest majority of the workers*.

In the course of the struggle, the Party in the Chicago District grew and developed. In August, 1930, we had only 73 cells with 776 dues paying members, in June, 1932, we had 221 cells with 2,488 dues paying members. The actual membership in the district is over 3,000 with Party organisation in 71 cities. In February, 1931, we had 8 shop cells with 47 members. In March, 1932, we had 35 cells with 206 members. These figures show *the weakness of the Party in Chicago because it is not rooted in the shops*. The outstanding problem confronting the Party in the factory and trade union work, is the proper application of methods of work enabling our comrades to connect themselves with the masses and develop activities and struggles. It must utilise the revolutionary spirit of the unemployed organisations and develop daily systematic planned work around the shops, primarily *inside the shops*.

To really change the present situation in the Chicago District, get rid of sectarianism, establish the Party in the workshops, trade unions and develop daily work among the factory masses,

the Party must transform its present methods of work outside the factories, and concentrate on the basic factories. Without this change there can be no Bolshevik Party.

THE END OF CAPITALIST STABILISATION AND THE BASIC TASKS OF THE BRITISH AND AMERICAN SECTIONS OF THE "C.I."

T. GUSEV.

I.—THE GROWTH OF THE REVOLUTIONARY UPSURGE, FASCISM AND SOCIAL-FASCISM.

THE clearest indication of the end of the stabilisation of capitalism is the development of the world revolutionary upsurge, which arose on the basis of the world economic crisis and includes the revolutions in China and Spain, the approaching revolutionary crisis in Germany, Poland and Japan, the tremendous strikes in Belgium, Czecho-Slovakia, Great Britain, U.S.A., the maturing of the revolutionary crisis in India and a series of revolts in South America (Chili, Peru, Brazil).

Ever increasing masses are coming forward to the front of revolution. The forces of the world revolution are growing. But at the same time, the forces of counter-revolution are rallying together. "The party of revolution rallies the party of counter-revolution" (Marx). The development of the revolutionary upsurge, and the growth of revolutionary crises cannot take place in any other way. There is not and could not be a revolution which did not have the counter-revolution against it. It is therefore not correct to think that the development of Fascism signifies a weakening in the development of the forces of revolution. This can only be the case after the defeat of the revolution, after the ebb of revolution, in the period of reaction (e.g., the growth of Fascism in Italy in 1922-23). But such a view is absolutely incorrect under conditions of the development of a revolutionary upsurge. The development of the revolutionary upsurge signifies not the weakening, but the growth of the forces of revolution. The forces of revolution are increasing and beginning their offensive, and as a result, the forces of counter-revolution are rallying and passing to the counter-offensive against the forces of revolution. The struggle is blazing up and rising to its highest level—to revolution.

Thus, in the epoch of the Socialist transform-

ation of society, bourgeois-imperialist counter-revolution is not some chance objective hindrance for revolution, but an historical inevitability. There cannot be revolution, without counter-revolution.

The historical inevitability of counter-revolution has to be stressed, particularly owing to the fact, that a view has appeared in some of the sections of the C.I. as though the development of Fascism is an unforeseen, and at the same time, very dangerous, "super difficulty" for the revolution, that the development of Fascism practically means the end of revolution. Fascism itself, according to this view, arose as the result of the incorrect course of the C.I. and its sections. Such a view of Fascism cannot be called anything but capitulatory. As, in the opinion of those who hold this view of Fascism, revolution can only be victorious when there is no counter-revolution, the appearance of Fascism is declared to decide the inevitable doom of revolution in advance. Therefore they propose to retreat, to capitulate to Fascism. Such capitulatory views were contained in the recent speech of Comrade Humbert Droz in the Swiss Communist Party, which objectively gave the International Rights a political platform.

Comrade Humbert Droz has renounced these views, but this cannot destroy the fact that such views appear from time to time, not only in Switzerland. The source of these views is the failure to understand that it is precisely the growth of the forces of revolution that inevitably evokes the solidification of the forces of Fascism.

The same failure to understand the relation between the growth of revolutionary forces, and the development of Fascism, in the period of the development and the growth of the revolutionary upsurge, lies at the basis of the fatalistic theories which arose a year ago in the German Communist Party, which were very properly criticised at the time by Comrade Thälmann. What is the essence of these fatalistic theories, which seem,

externally, to be similar to the thesis of Marx of the inevitability of the rallying of the forces of counter-revolution, in the course of the development of revolution; but in reality are a gross distortion of this thesis? The essence of these fatalistic theories is that the working class must first pass through the Fascist reaction to understand the necessity for revolution, that only a Fascist dictatorship can bring the masses right up to the necessity of commencing a revolutionary struggle; in short, that without counter-revolution, revolution is impossible, that the counter-revolution rallies the party of revolution. This is the direct opposite of what Marx says. It is not revolution which evokes counter-revolution as Marx and Lenin taught, but, they hold the contrary, counter-revolution produces revolution. Thus the starting point of the revolutionary upsurge is not the growth of the forces of revolution, as Marx and Lenin taught, but the growth of the forces of counter-revolution.

A correct Marxist-Leninist postulation of the question of the relationship between the growth of the forces of revolution, and those of Fascism, is of decisive importance to the whole strategy of the C.I. and its sections. The views of Humbert Droz lead to a retreating capitulatory strategy, and the views of the German "fatalists"; to a passive waiting strategy, i.e., in practice to the same capitulation to Fascism as with Humbert Droz. However, the revolutionary upsurge cannot mean anything else but the beginning of the strategic advance of the revolutionary forces, in which there may be defensive and offensive tactical fights.

The question of the relations between Fascism and Social-Fascism is of equal importance for Bolshevik strategy to the question of the relations between the growth of revolutionary forces and the development of Fascism. This question is worked out in detail in the theses. But in some sections, nevertheless, a misunderstanding of the basic rôle of Social-Democracy as the chief social bulwark of the bourgeoisie continues to exist, and there is a misunderstanding of Bolshevik strategy in connection with this.

The Bolshevik strategy of the C.I. has always been to deal the main blows against the conciliatory parties (against the Social-Democrats and the national reformists). It is sufficient to glance at the history of the Russian revolution to see this.

Here is what Stalin said when reviewing the three phases of the Russian revolution:

First phase, from 1903 to the February revolution in 1917.

Aim: The overthrow of Czarism, and the abolition of the last feudal survivals.

The essential force of the revolution: the proletariat.

The immediate reserve: the peasants.

Direction of immediate attack: to isolate the liberal-monarchist bourgeoisie who were obliged to win over the peasants and ward off the revolution by an agreement with Czarism.

Disposition of forces: alliance of workers with peasants . . .

Second phase, March, 1917—October, 1917.

Aim: To overthrow imperialism in Russia and withdraw from the imperialist war.

Essential force of the revolution: the proletariat.

Immediate reserve: the poorer ranks of the peasants.

Probable reserve: the proletariat of neighbouring countries.

Favouring circumstances: the prolonged war and the imperialist crisis.

Direction of immediate attack: to isolate the petty-bourgeois democrats (i.e., the Mensheviks and the Socialist-revolutionaries) who were trying to win over the mass of rural workers and to avert revolution by an agreement with imperialism.

Disposition of forces: alliance of workers with the poorest peasants . . .

Third phase (begun after the October revolution.)

Aim: To consolidate the dictatorship of the proletariat in one country and to use it as a fulcrum for the overthrowing of imperialism in all countries. The revolution is not to be limited to one sole country and has entered its world-wide stage.

Essential force: the dictatorship of the proletariat in one country, and the revolutionary movements of the proletariat in other countries.

Principal reserves: the semi-proletarian masses and the peasants of advanced lands, the nationalist (liberationist) movements in colonies and dependent states.

Direction of immediate attack: to isolate the petty bourgeoisie partisans of Second International, promoters of the policy of conciliation with imperialism.

Disposition of forces: alliance of proletarian revolution with nationalist movements in colonies and dependent states. (Stalin, "Leninism," page 96.)

As we see, at all three stages, the main blow was directed against the conciliatory parties.

In 1905, the Bolsheviks were accused of getting too absorbed in the struggle against the liberal-monarchist conciliatory bourgeoisie, and paying less attention to the struggle against the enemy, against Czarism. In 1917, the Bolsheviks were

accused of getting too absorbed in the struggle against the conciliatory petty-bourgeois parties, the mensheviks and S.R.'s, paying less attention to the struggle against the enemy, against the bourgeoisie.

Such accusations only show a complete failure to understand the rôle of the conciliatory parties and the essence of Bolshevik strategy.

Why must the main blows be directed against the conciliatory parties in the period of the preparations for revolution, and its approaching development?

Because the conciliatory parties (the Social-Fascists and the national reformists) in the period of approaching revolutionary development, are the most dangerous social bulwark of the enemies of revolution. Therefore, it is impossible to overthrow the enemy without isolating these parties, without tearing the wide masses of the toilers away from them.

Both Social-Fascism and Fascism represent bourgeois-imperialist counter-revolution, but Social-Fascism is a special detachment of bourgeois-imperialist counter-revolution, having its own special tasks. What are these special tasks? They are to strive by all means to reach a compromise, to conciliate the proletariat with its class enemy, with the bourgeoisie (particularly with Fascism). They are to preach compromise, and also to carry on a bogus "struggle" against Fascism, to restrain the workers from attacks on Fascism, from resistance to the political and economic offensive of capital, or, in short, to restrain the workers from revolutionary activity, from revolution. Thus Social-Fascism plays the rôle of a shield, behind which counter-revolution can organise its forces. Therefore, to beat the enemy, the bourgeoisie, we must direct the main blow against its chief social bulwark, against the chief enemy of Communism in the working class, against Social-Democracy, against Social-Fascism.

It may seem that in Germany, at the present time, for example, the chief social bulwark of the bourgeoisie is Fascism, and that, therefore, we should deal the chief blows against Fascism.

This is not correct. It is not correct, firstly, because Fascism is not our chief enemy in the workers' movement, but Social-Fascism is our chief enemy there. What does this mean? It means that to win over the majority of the proletariat, i.e., to prepare the *basic* condition for the proletarian revolution, it is necessary to direct the chief blows against Social-Fascism.

It is not correct, secondly, because the blows directed by us against Social-Fascism differ from the blows delivered against Fascism. Fascism is open counter-revolution utilising social dema-

gogy. Social-Fascism is concealed counter-revolution. For example, take the attitude of German Fascism and German Social-Fascism to intervention in the U.S.S.R. The Fascists are for intervention, and openly say so, while the Social-Fascists are also for intervention, but talk openly, of defence of the U.S.S.R. (resolution of the II International). This means that we have to strike at Fascism, in a different manner from Social-Fascism.

It is in Germany at the present time that we can see most clearly the difference in the character of the blows which we deal against Social-Fascism and against Fascism. We expose the Social-Fascists, but we never call for an armed struggle against them. We fight the Fascists in the streets, carrying on explanatory work among the masses to the extent that the Fascists still use social demagogy. In the period of preparations for revolution (and it is just such a period which we are now passing through in Germany, Poland and Japan), our chief weapon is exposure, or to use the expression of Marx, the "weapon of criticism." The armed struggle, or as Marx expressed it, the "criticism of weapons," is our secondary weapon in this period. We direct the chief weapon against the main social bulwark of the bourgeoisie.

The united front with the Social-Democratic workers in the struggle against the Fascist gangs, unites both forms of weapon—the chief and the secondary weapons. On the one hand, the united front is an armed struggle against Fascist gangs, and on the other hand, the united front is the best means of exposing the Social-Fascist leaders in practice.

From all this, it is clear, that in the period of preparations for revolution, we direct our chief weapon at this period against our chief enemy in the working class, i.e., against Social-Fascism.

The main blows against Social-Fascism, the isolation of Social-Fascism, — this means the winning over of the majority of the working class, and also the toiling masses of the petty bourgeoisie in town and village, converting the toiling masses of the petty bourgeoisie from a reserve of the bourgeoisie into a reserve of the proletariat. Without this, the victory of the revolution is impossible.

II.—THE WINNING OVER OF THE MAJORITY OF THE PROLETARIAT AS THE FUNDAMENTAL STRATEGIC TASK OF THE SECTIONS OF THE C.I.

The end of capitalist stabilisation and the growth of the revolutionary upsurge sets the basic strategic task of winning over the majority of the working class before all sections of the C.I.

This task is made vastly easier because, as the result of three years of crisis, we find everywhere an upsurge of the mass movement, proceeding differently in different countries. The situation which has arisen at the present time may be characterised as follows: The wide masses of the workers (and, in some countries, the peasants as well) are prepared for the struggle. Some big sections of workers are entering the struggle, sometimes under the leadership of the Communist Party (Brux), sometimes (especially in economic fights) under the leadership of the reformists (Lancashire), and recently they have begun to act independently, against the wishes of the trade unions (Belgium). In the latter two cases, the leadership of the struggle began to come under the Communists' influence in those places where they attempted to intervene, which is a very significant thing.

The influence of the sections of the C.I. is growing everywhere, despite the fact that, in a number of sections, we cannot point to any considerable successes in the matter of improving their work in the period since the XI Plenum, either politically or organisationally, which might have explained the increase in their influence.

The masses want to fight. They are seeking leadership, and, however weak the work of our sections may be, they come to us.

The course of the Lancashire strike may serve as a clear example of the strong tendency towards the Communist Party, of the masses entering the struggle. Take the beginning of this strike, the strike in Burnley. In this town there are 87 textile factories, and the number of workers reaches 25,000. In Burnley the Communist Party had 9 members and 9 non-Party members of the Minority Movement. In addition, our Party was not popular among the organised workers because it had obtained a firm reputation for being against the trade unions. On July 14th, owing to the growth of strike sentiment among the workers, our Party held a meeting in Burnley. Unexpectedly, 5,000 workers came to the meeting, which was an unprecedented event in Burnley. This meeting was decisive. On the next day, July 25th, the strike commenced, and the leadership was practically in the hands of the Party, although the Party had not prepared for this. The workers demanded that the members of the Party should give them instructions about the further extension of the strike. In two days the strike pickets under Party leadership closed all the 87 factories. In the night of July 27-28 the Party organised a march to the neighbouring textile centre of Nelson, with the

aim of extending the strike. 15,000 workers took part in the march.

I will not describe the further course of the strike. The Party made a number of mistakes and let the leadership of the big mass movement slip out of its hands.

Does not this example of the Lancashire strike and the example of the American Communist Party, which, last year, led the big miners' strikes in Illinois and Ohio, show that the masses are ready for the fight, and are seeking the leadership of the Communist Parties and the Red Trade Unions; that Communists need only to exert even slight efforts and the leadership will fall into their hands?

The things which hindered the English and American sections most of all in obtaining the leadership of mass activity was their sectarian approach to the masses, their over-estimation of the influence of the Social-Fascists and trade union bureaucrats among the workers, and hence their efforts to remain only in the opposition. Then there is the completely insufficient initiative of the lower Party organisations and the Red Trade Unions, and also the R.T.U.O., and, finally, the weakness of our cadres.

The sectarian approach to the masses. The sources of the sectarian approach to the masses in Great Britain and the U.S.A. are different. In Great Britain, it is to be explained by the fact that the British Communist Party has supported the Labour Party at the elections for a number of years, and the necessary transition to the tactic of "class against class" was accompanied by a stubborn inner-Party struggle against the right deviation. Therefore, the tactic of the united front with the workers who belonged to the Labour Party was looked on, by a large portion of the Party members, as a step back from the tactic of "class against class." On this basis, there arose a sectarian resistance in the C.P.G.B. to the adoption of the tactic of the united front with the workers who belonged to the Labour Party and the I.L.P. The British comrades were afraid of the united front, and therefore, in spite of many favourable conditions, the British Communist Party has hardly any practical achievements in this matter. However, in countries like Great Britain and Germany, where there are big Social-Fascist parties and big reformist trade unions, there can be no question of winning over the majority of the workers unless the tactic of the united front is adopted, and unless work is carried on in the trade unions. Therefore, the sectarian tendencies in the British Communist Party lead in reality to a right opportunist lagging behind the mass movement, and this is the chief danger.

The situation in England at the present time is such that the British Communist Party could win thousands of workers from the Labour Party and the I.L.P. into its ranks, and those of the Minority Movement. The majority of the members of such organisations as the Poplar Branch of the I.L.P. in London, and a number of others, might join our Party. But the Party does not see this task, and does not set itself this task, because it does not know how to distinguish the manoeuvres of the leaders, from the genuine strivings of the workers. Therefore, it happens that the Party repulses the workers of the Labour Party and the I.L.P. who are turning in its direction.

Here is a very characteristic example of how this is done.

As we know, the I.L.P. recently split away from the Labour Party and published its "new programme." Among these "rules" there are some very "left" things—"the winning of power by the united working class," "abandonment of the method of gradual reform," "a swift passage from capitalism to Socialism," "the socialisation of the vital resources of the country, including the banks and finances, the land and agriculture, the chief branches of industry and transport," etc.

This is all inside the country. On an international scale, there is the following programme: "Steadfast opposition by individual and collective resistance to all war preparations and tendencies. If war is declared . . . the I.L.P. will demand . . . an immediate general strike. It reaffirms its demand for disarmament by example, irrespective of what other Governments may do."

How did our Communist Party react to the disaffiliation of the I.L.P. from the Labour Party, and its rules and programme, which I have just quoted?

Firstly, the disaffiliation of the I.L.P. from the Labour Party was declared to be a "swindle." There is no doubt that there was a very considerable proportion of swindling in the disaffiliation of the I.L.P. But to describe it entirely as swindling means to fail to see the mass of members of the I.L.P. behind the swindling faces of the leaders, or that these members really want to renew, or, as the members of the I.L.P. themselves say, to "rejuvenate" the I.L.P. and turn it into a revolutionary party. This genuine leftward turn of the workers in the I.L.P. (and in the Labour Party) is missed by our Party. The Party does not understand that when workers leave the Labour Party, this is a difficult turning point in their political development.

Secondly, with regard to the programme of the

I.L.P., an article was published in the "Daily Worker" under the title: "Lay down your arms; surrender to imperialism."

In this article, quotations were given from the programme of the I.L.P., which I have already cited, that the I.L.P. repeats its demand for England to set the example of disarmament "irrespective of what other governments may do."

Further, the article goes on to "prove" in a "smart" and far-fetched manner, something which is not in the programme—namely, that the I.L.P. proposes that the Red Army should set the example of disarmament.

It is not surprising that such methods arouse indignation among the workers who sympathise with the I.L.P. and repulse them from the Communist Party.

One Lancashire worker, whom the "Daily Worker" itself describes "a good fighter for the workers," wrote a letter to the Editor on the subject of this article. In reply to this letter, the "Daily Worker" published an article under the title: "The I.L.P. wants to disarm the proletariat."

Extracts are given in this article from the letter of the worker.

Here are these extracts:

"The article is an insult to the intelligence of every class-conscious worker. It is a direct misrepresentation of the actual facts.

"The Communist Party knows perfectly well that when the I.L.P. says 'disarm by example' they do not mean the revolutionary workers, but the National Government."

The article further contains the following brilliant syllogism:

The I.L.P. demands that England should set the example of disarmament. But the I.L.P. is a party which calls itself Socialist. Therefore, it would demand that a Socialist government in England should set this example. Therefore, it demands that the Socialist government of the U.S.S.R. should set the example of disarmament.

What sort of idiots does the "Daily Worker" think the British workers are, when it dares to publish such articles! These articles, comrades, are not mere funniosities, not rarities from the museum of muddleheadedness, which fall outside the sphere of class analysis. No, this is a line, this is the tactic by which the British comrades hope to win over the workers.

Is it possible to organise a united front with the workers of the I.L.P. and the Labour Party with such a tactical line?

I will pass on to the U.S.A. The sources of the sectarian approach to the masses in the Com-

unist Party of the U.S.A. are not the same as in England. Sectarianism is explained here by the fact that, up to the present, the majority of the members, and especially the leading cadres of the Party, have not been native-born American workers, and a considerable proportion of the cadres come from small industry, while a considerable number of them are of petty-bourgeois origin. The real nature of this sectarianism consists in a right opportunist lagging behind the mass movement.

In distinction to the British Communist Party, the Communist Party of the U.S.A. has several big strikes to its credit, which it led independently.

This experience shows that our Parties and Red Trade Unions have wide possibilities of leading independent economic fights. But this possibility is utilised without any definite and consistently applied plan, in a partisan manner, from time to time, and case to case. Therefore, it is not surprising that the strikes which are successfully led by us do not leave any trace on our Parties and our trade unions. Remember the famous strike of the textile workers in Gastonia, which obtained the sympathy of the workers of the south for us, and which gave us the possibility of building up our Party organisation there. And what have we now in Gastonia? Not a single Party member. Take last year's strike in Illinois and Ohio. After the strike, our union did not grow stronger there, but weakened.

The C.P.U.S.A. has recently led several big strikes and big revolutionary unemployed organisations, but it is quite obvious that strong sectarian tendencies, especially on the question of the attitude to partial demands, lie at the basis of this lack of plan and partisan attitude in the sphere of the leadership of economic fights by the C.P.U.S.A.

Comrade Bedacht states that in a number of cases he found, that when our comrades spoke in the election campaign, they apologised for the fact that the Party put forward partial demands. They stated, that, of course, they knew that the solution of all problems is revolution, but that the workers do not know this, and therefore we put forward partial demands, although they have absolutely no meaning (laughter). At one meeting where Comrade Bedacht spoke on the question of social insurance, the workers in the hall told him that other Party speakers had informed them that our campaign for social insurance was not serious, that we did not expect to get anything out of it, and we were not worrying much about it, because any concessions would objectively patch up the capitalist system, the workers

would be satisfied, and would not want a revolution.

Sectarian tendencies in the C.P.U.S.A. are the chief hindrance to carrying out the tactic of the united front.

Here is one example, of many, showing how this tactic is operated.

There was a strike of 25,000 textile workers in Lawrence. At the meetings of the strikers, which were held by the United Textile Workers' Union (affiliated to the A.F. of L.), there were usually 3,000 to 8,000 persons. We held meetings on the outskirts, and 300 to 500 people came to us. Thus we were isolated from the basic masses of strikers. When the reformists called a meeting for the last time, and thousands of workers came to it, there was no one to speak at this meeting, because the reformists had already decided to end the strike, and they left the meeting unattended to. But our comrades did not know about this meeting, as they took very little interest in any of the meetings called by the reformists. The strike was broken.

One American comrade describes the attitude of the Party to the strike as follows: They look on the struggle led by the revolutionary trade unions as the struggle of "our workers," and on the strikes led by the A.F. of L. as the struggle of "workers who are not ours."

Here is another American witness, Comrade Bedacht, who stated at the July session of the Polit Bureau: "Our comrades divide the working class into two categories—our friends and our enemies."

"Our workers," and "not our workers"—that is the united front, American style! However, this sectarian position not only fails to hinder, but is the basis for deeply opportunist "gentlemen's agreements" with the reformists, for the "division of spheres of influence," as was the case in Illinois.

Work among the unemployed, on the admission of the American comrades themselves (statement of Comrade Newton), "is still carried out on a narrow basis and has a sectarian character." Therefore, it is not surprising that it is weakening and narrowing. In the first quarter of 1932, there were 30,000 registered in the unemployed organisations, and in the second quarter, there were 13,000.

One of the biggest mass political actions, in which the Party played a prominent rôle, was the movement of the veterans.* I must stop to analyse the line of the Party in this movement, in view of the fact that such mass movements,

*See "Communist International," No. 16 (1932).

which extend to the petty-bourgeoisie, as well as the workers, are becoming more widespread in the U.S.A., and the question of the winning over of these masses by our Party becomes exceptionally important.

In the leadership of the Party, with regard to the veterans' movement, there were a number of vacillations, the chief source of which was the doctrinaire sectarian approach to the masses. At first the Polburo made a decision: "Convert the march of the veterans into the sending of a mass delegation elected by ex-soldiers in Chicago, Cleveland, Detroit, Pittsburgh, Philadelphia and New York."

As further events showed, this decision was absolutely incorrect, and, in essence, was likely to demobilise the masses and stifle their initiative.

The movement developed widely, and could have become still wider, if the Party had not taken a completely incorrect line from the very start.

But even when the movement had become very wide, and 25,000 veterans had gathered in Washington, the Polburo was still unable to give up its doctrinaire sectarian approach to it, and made the following decision: "Our comrades must take the line of carrying out the sharpest class differentiation in the camp of the veterans."

Instead of trying to extend the influence of the Workers' Ex-Servicemen's League, which had been organised by us, and taking the leadership of the movement as a whole, the League was to isolate itself from the overwhelming majority of the veterans, from the petty-bourgeois sections, and hand them over to the fascist, Captain Waters, to Norman Thomas of the A.F. of L., and to the Reverend Cox, the founder of the Blue Shirt fascist organisation.

What is the use of such a policy? It is not a line for winning over the masses. It is the line of running away from the masses.

The tendency to hide from the masses led to strong vacillations on the question of the organisation and leadership of the struggle of those hundreds of thousands of working families, who are at the same time the owners of small houses, against the government and the banks which are taking these houses away from these workers, for non-payment of taxes, or interest on mortgages. Such a movement, you see, is not a pure class movement, because in this struggle the working class is not counter-posed to the capitalists!

The same doctrinaire tendency causes doubts among the leadership on the question of the organisation of the struggle of the workers and the petty-bourgeois strata against the automobile tax, which bears with equal weight on the poor little Ford, which is essential for the farmer or

the worker, and the luxurious automobile of the millionaire.

In the U.S.A. there are enormous possibilities of mobilising and organising the masses. Take only the movement of the railwaymen for a pension. This movement fell into the hands of the democratic politicians who introduced a Pension Bill into Congress. At the same time they formed a Pension Bill Club which has over 250,000 members (according to the figures of these politicians), and publishes a newspaper with a circulation of over 400,000.

The T.U.U.L.* paid no attention to this movement for over a year, in spite of the fact that mass meetings, for the popularisation of this Bill, were taking place everywhere. It was only a year later that it intervened, and then only very undecidedly.

At the present time, in the North-Western states, there is developing a peculiar wide "strike" movement of farmers, directed towards raising prices. The farmers have organised many pickets, with the aim of raising prices, and they refuse to allow food to be taken into the towns.

According to telegrams, the A.F.L. is already making attempts to wreck this movement by all kinds of manoeuvres. The pickets have already had big conflicts with the police; and what is our Party doing? The telegrams do not say anything. Evidently it is not doing anything and is occupied with wavering and doubting.

These doubts and waverings, caused by the doctrinaire sectarian approach to the mass movement, must be very great in the present case, because this movement of the farmers is directed towards increasing the prices on food, which is plainly not advantageous to the workers as consumers.

I must examine this case in more detail. Higher prices on necessities are not advantageous to the workers. Therefore, it might be said, that, in this case, the workers should act against the farmers.

Such a line of reasoning is absolutely incorrect. Such a tactical line would be a fatal political mistake, because objectively it would lead to our Party coming out against the farmers and in alliance with the bankers, the exploiting farmers, and the police, who are beating up the farmers' pickets.

It would also be the grossest political mistake for the Party to declare itself neutral with regard to this movement on the grounds that, on the one hand, this movement is objectively revolutionary as it is directed against the capitalist system, but, on the other hand, it is antagonistic to the inter-

*Trade Union Unity League.

sts of the workers. Our Party can never win over the masses if it keeps neutral and neglects such objectively revolutionary movements.

The Party must call on the workers to support the movement of the ruined farmers for higher prices and for the annulment of mortgages, and for reduced rents, at the same time organising the workers for the struggle against wage-cuts, and for higher wages. The Party must explain to the workers and poor farmers the decisive importance of their joint struggle against the capitalist system, the necessity of the development and strengthening of their alliance in this struggle, the necessity of mutual aid in this struggle.

The deepening of the economic crisis, the end of capitalist stabilisation, and the revolutionary upsurge are bringing with them tremendous mass movements, fighting actions of *all* the oppressed and exploited, with the most varied and frequently contradictory demands. If we get confused in these contradictions, if we hide from them, if we are content with friendly neutrality towards the petty bourgeois masses who are entering the fight against capitalism under reactionary slogans, we shall display the completest failure to understand how a popular revolution takes place, and what must be our attitude to mass movements.

Here is what Lenin wrote in connection with the question of the Irish Rebellion in 1916:—

"To imagine that a social revolution could possibly take place without the revolt of the little nations in the colonies and in Europe, without revolutionary outbursts on the part of the petty-bourgeoisie with all their prejudices, without the movement of the non-class-conscious proletarian and semi-proletarian masses against the oppression of the landlords, the church, the monarchy, the national bourgeoisie, etc.—to think this means to *abandon social revolution*. It would mean to draw up troops in one place and say: 'We are for socialism'; and, in another place, and say: 'We are for imperialism,' and this will be the social revolution . . . The socialist revolution in Europe cannot be anything else but an outburst of the mass struggle of all the oppressed and discontented. Some of the petty-bourgeoisie and the backward workers will inevitably take part in it—without this participation it is impossible to have a *mass* struggle and impossible to have *any* revolution, and it is equally inevitable that they will bring into the movement their prejudices, their reactionary fantasies, their weaknesses and mistakes. But, *objectively*, they will attack *capital*, and the conscious vanguard of the revolution, the advanced proletariat, expressing this objective truth of the varied, many-voiced, diverse mass

struggle, can unite and direct it, win the power, seize the banks, expropriate the trusts which are hated by all (although for different causes), and carry out other methods of dictatorship which, on the whole, will bring about the overthrow of the bourgeoisie and the victory of socialism, which is not immediately 'cleansed' from petty-bourgeois dross" (Lenin: "Results of the Discussion on Self-Determination").

The decisive elimination of the doctrinaire sectarian approach to mass movements which dooms the Party to right opportunist backwardness, such is the central and all-deciding task of the British and American sections of the C.I. Without such an elimination, without a radical change in the approach to the masses, these Parties will be fated to a position in which the masses will pass by them, and, at the best, they will sometimes, and in individual cases, be able to take charge of separate mass actions in a partisan manner, as was the case in Burnley and in Illinois; they will not be able to consolidate their influence on the masses firmly.

What are the basic conditions which are necessary to bring about this decisive change in the approach to the masses? There are two conditions—the reorganisation of the Party on the basis of inner-Party democracy, and the formation of new cadres.

III.—INNER-PARTY DEMOCRACY — THE FIRST FUNDAMENTAL CONDITION FOR THE WINNING OF THE MASSES.

I do not intend to speak of formal democracy, of the democracy which is preached by the social-democrats, and on the basis of which, they have built up their Party. I wish to talk about real Bolshevik democracy. What is Bolshevik democracy? It consists in drawing all of the members of the Party into the political life of the Party, into the everyday work and struggle of the Party, into the collective work of preparing and leading mass struggles, into energetic comradesly work on the basis of iron inner-Party discipline, because Bolshevik democracy does not exclude, but presupposes iron Party discipline.

"We understand democracy as the raising of the activity and class-consciousness of the Party masses, as the systematic attraction of the Party masses in practice, not only into the discussion of questions, but into the leadership of the work" (Stalin).

There is still far too little of such genuine Bolshevik democracy in many sections of the C.I., and this is the first and basic cause why these sections cannot turn towards the broad masses.

I shall use chiefly American material for illustrating the question of inner-Party democracy,

but such, if not all, that I shall say about the shortcomings in the development of Bolshevik democracy in the American Party, applies also to other sections.

In practice, the Party members, the Party cells are not drawn into political life. Politics is for the leading organs, or, at best, for the activists. It never gets lower than the activists.

"The American comrades are afraid of political discussion; they have not organised any discussion for the study of the decisions of the 13th Plenum, and are not organising any discussion for the study of the decisions of the 14th Plenum now. In the cells only organisational and technical questions are discussed, and the collection of money is the chief work" (From the report of the instructor of the C.I.).

Sometimes general Party meetings are called, but they are only for show. The speaker gives his speech, replies to questions, and at the end there is no discussion, no consideration whatever.

Can there be any question of initiative among the Party members and the lower Party organisations under such conditions?

With regard to the attitude towards the new Party members, here is a typical example from the C.P.U.S.A.

"During the last fights of the unemployed in New Connington, about 150 workers joined the Party. They received Party cards, and maybe were invited two or three times to the meetings of the Party organisation, but only 30 out of 150 appeared at these meetings. Therefore, the others were put down as 'hopeless,' and no attempts were made to visit them at home, to consult them, to make them into active Party members, etc. Within a few weeks 120 of them were again lost for the Party" (From the letter of the instructor).

The workers have to overcome tremendous difficulties to get into our Party.

Here is the attitude to new members in Great Britain:

"In Eccles we have a group of new comrades, and amongst them, one old comrade who has been in the Party since 1923. Some of the new comrades were previously in the I.L.P. At first they all worked well, together with the old comrade, but when they began to develop, and after they had studied the resolutions of the E.C.C.I., disagreed with the old comrade on a few questions, he began to tell them that they were not in the I.L.P. now, etc." (Minutes of the P.B., July 9th, 1932).

I could give many facts showing that efforts to keep and to make the best use of Party workers are hindered by a formal bureaucratic understanding of Party discipline.

Here is still another example of exceptionally

abnormal relations between the leaders and members of the organisation. I am speaking of the Pittsburgh City organisation. Over 70 per cent. of the population of Pittsburgh consists of steel smelters and metal workers. Our organisation had 66 members, of whom only two were workers in the steel industry.

The relations between the secretary of the District Committee and the members of the city organisation were completely abnormal. The Secretariat of the District Committee looked on the whole city organisation as a hive of opportunists who did not want to work, but wanted to be quiet, etc. The workers of the Party, and the trade unions, did not take any part in the everyday work of the city organisation. To carry out this work, people were sent to Pittsburgh from New York and other Party organisations. All this still further deepened the impression of the members of the city organisation that they were not considered as full members of the Party, and they were not recognised by the District Committee. The result of this unhealthy situation very soon made itself felt at the end of the strike. Oppositional feelings arose. The Secretariat of the District Committee reacted to this, describing the comrades as opportunists, slackers, demoralised elements, etc.

At the present time the Pittsburgh organisation has become healthier; it has grown and strengthened. Almost all the old Party members are actively working.

Something similar to the events in Pittsburgh took place at Cleveland also.

The shortcomings of inner-Party democracy in the U.S.A. stand out with increasing prominence in the attitude taken up towards mass organisations. They are looked on, and treated as a source of money.

In a mass organisation under our control, the International Workers' Order, we take \$2 a month membership dues from the workers. As a result, in the course of the first quarter of this year alone, 1,800 members of this organisation were expelled for non-payment of membership dues.

This is the destruction, and not the strengthening of mass organisations, the mass basis of the Party.

The financial policy of the American Party contains anti-democratic, purely business features. The mass organisations have repeatedly protested against the free way in which the Party organisations deal with their money. The tremendous difference between the salaries of the lower and higher functionaries cannot in any way fit in with inner-Party democracy. Tremendous amounts of money are spent, without any necessity, on

avelling expenses, which are very high in the U.S.A., and there is no money for the newspaper in the south, "The Southern Worker" (a mere \$20 a week), and this paper, which had already become popular among the negroes, has been discontinued.

As you see, comrades, the financial policy of the Party plays an extremely big political rôle, both in the matter of winning over the masses, and in the development of inner-Party democracy, and in the organisation of the press.

Is it possible for a Party which suffers from such defects in the sphere of inner-Party democracy, such as the absence of political life in the cells, a formal and bureaucratic attitude to the question of securing new members for the Party, absolutely insufficient collective work in the leading organs, an impermissible attitude to mass organisations, an anti-democratic financial policy—is it possible for a Party with such defects to cope with the tasks which face it at the present time—the task of firmly attaching to itself those broad masses who are being roused to the struggle in the crisis, and securing them for the Communist Party? No, it is impossible. It is precisely these shortcomings which explain the tremendous fluctuations in the Party membership.

A sharp change is necessary, a decisive change in the inner Party régime. Unless this takes place, the Party cannot become a mass Party. Unless this takes place, its numerical growth and the extension of its political influence will lag far behind and more behind the mass upsurge, and the Party will not eliminate its sectarianism, its separation from the basic strata of the native-born American workers.

This decisive change in the inner-Party régime, this democratisation of the Party, cannot be carried out unless new cadres are formed in the Party and the old ones strengthened.

—THE RENEWAL AND STRENGTHENING OF CADRES THE SECOND BASIC LINK FOR THE WINNING OVER OF THE MASSES.

The tremendous importance of drawing in new cadres, the renewal of cadres, and the strengthening of these, evidently remains foreign to the American and English Parties up to the present time. They do not understand that new cadres form the future of the Party, and they stubbornly cling to the old cadres.

"We get the impression," writes the instructor, "that the Party does not want to have new cadres at all. Some of the cadres, who have completely failed dozens of times in the districts, are again sent to other districts."

Listen to what Comrade D. said at a meeting of the Pol-Buro: "I think it a very characteristic

fact that in the 13th year of our Party's existence there is not a single district with a leadership composed of workers from that district, of participators in the struggle of this district."

This shows, best of all, that a policy of securing new cadres is not carried on. The work is conducted with one and the same cadre, shifting them from one district to another, and, furthermore, they are chiefly New York cadres.

Here is what the instructor writes in connection with this question in the Pittsburgh organisation:

"Simple workers were considered to be insufficiently trained to be accepted into the Party. Throughout the whole strike of the miners the city organisation did not recruit a single member. There were undoubted symptoms of white chauvinism as well."

Take further the composition of the students at the International Party Schools. Experience has shown during the last year that the leaders of the American Communist Party approached the question of selecting the students with a casualness bordering on the criminal. The composition of the students was unsatisfactory, and the directors of the School had to devote a tremendous amount of energy to the struggle against deviations, against white chauvinism, anti-semitism, and factious groupings which arose in the American group.

The British Communist Party was instructed by the C.I. to select 250 comrades and put them through a school, in the course of six months. Recently we received a report on the carrying out of the resolution of the C.I., and we noted definite achievements on every task, except the task of forming new cadres. Instead of 250, only a few dozen persons were put through the schools.

It must be remembered that the basic cadres of the English and American Communist Parties have not been changed for several years. These cadres grew up in the sectarian period of the existence of the Parties. Many of these comrades cannot get rid of their sectarian tendencies. It is precisely this part of the cadres which forms the chief hindrance to eliminating sectarianism.

With regard to the U.S.A., I should especially add that a certain part of the cadres grew up in conditions of unprincipled factional struggle, in other words, that this part of the cadres did not come forward because they were completely suitable for responsible political and organisational work. However, there are many facts showing that new cadres of leaders have arisen among the working masses, who have made themselves prominent in strikes in Britain, U.S.A., Belgium, etc., and that these new cadres are genuine mass workers, and incomparably more strongly con-

nected with the masses than a large part of the old cadres, who are incapable of abandoning their sectarian tendencies. They have already been tested in experience, in Party work in Britain, where a visible improvement of our work in the factories, and the turn towards the masses is connected precisely with the entrance of these new cadres into the Party. They were tested by experience in the Party organisation of Chicago. In those sections of Chicago in which new cadres were secured, the work improved, according to the testimony of Comrade Gebert, but in the sections where there are no new cadres, it is in as deep a decline as it was before.

By enlarging our cadres, by bringing in new forces which have been thrown up by the masses in the ever-widening struggle, by drawing new cadres into the Party and ideologically training them, we shall link ourselves firmly, with the masses, renew and strengthen the Party cadres and put aside those who resist the drawing in of cadres, removing the fossilised sectarian elements from the leadership—this is our task. Unless this task is decisively carried out, there cannot be any turn away from sectarian isolation and towards the masses.

The British and American Parties are faced at present with four fundamental tasks:

- (1) To direct the basic strategic blows against Social-Democracy, to win the masses away from it, to isolate it from the masses;
- (2) To win over the majority of the proletariat and the poor farmers, to train them in a series of fights and to convert them into our political army;

(3) To organise our Party into a mass Party on the basis of Bolshevik inner-Party Democracy based on iron discipline, into a revolutionary staff of this political army;

(4) To enlarge, strengthen and renew our Party General Staff.

In 1925 Comrade Stalin described the revolutionary outlook as follows:

"The world revolutionary movement at the present moment has entered the zone of the ebb of revolution, but this ebb must give place to a flow which may end in the victory of the proletariat, but also may not end in this victory, but be replaced by a fresh ebb which, in turn, will give place to a new flow of the revolution." (Stalin: Questions of Leninism).

The prophecy of Comrade Stalin was justified. We have now a new flow of revolution, and this flow may end in victory. But for England and the U.S.A. this victory is only possible if these four fundamental tasks are carried out: the destruction of Social-Democracy, the destruction of Social-Fascism, the formation of a mass political army, the conversion of the Party into the fighting staff of this army, and the formation of a strong general staff.

If they are able to carry out these tasks, then victory will be obtained in the second round of revolutions and wars.

But, however things may end in Britain and the U.S.A., it is quite clear that the basis of the world revolution, the U.S.S.R., will emerge from the second round of revolutions and wars larger and stronger.

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CLOSING REMARKS BY GOTTWALDT:

IN the discussion on the speeches of the Czecho-Slovakian delegation—on the speeches of Guttman, Schwermann and my co-report—there were various differences of opinion and misunderstandings. It is therefore necessary, in my closing remarks, to touch once again on some important problems, and to define our standpoint more precisely.

The first question concerns the relation of the communists to the masses, in particular to the working class. The Communist Party is the most class-conscious part of the working class, its vanguard. The main task of the Communist parties in capitalist countries to-day, is to win over and prepare the majority of the working class for the revolutionary struggle for the dictatorship of the proletariat. The way to this is decisive, self-sacrificing and consistent upholding and defence of their *daily* class interests.

Hitherto the situation has been such that the majority of the working class had been under the influence of the class enemy. This is not only on account of *terrorism*, but also on account of manifold *ideological* influences, and of different social gradations within the working class itself. The result of this is that there are many illusions, prejudices and petty-bourgeois views prevalent among the masses of the workers. Have we got to reckon with these things? Undoubtedly we have! We must be well acquainted with the state of feeling and the views of the masses, and must study them to determine the tactics and methods of our *approach* to the masses in each *concrete case*. Anyone who attempts to approach the masses without regard to the concrete state of feeling prevalent among them, will always be outside of the mark. Does this mean that we ought to *adapt ourselves* to the state of feeling among the backward elements or associate ourselves with their illusions? No! We must associate ourselves with their necessities, with their *daily* class interests. We must be acquainted with the state of feeling among them, it varies from time to time, *not* to adapt ourselves to this state of feeling, but to *overcome* it, by suitable means and methods, in so far as it is the expression of the influence exercised by the class enemy. And the best means for this purpose is the *self-experience* of the masses. In my speech I said that at the same time we must *earn* from the masses. Is that correct? Certainly! For tremendous revolutionary energies and revolutionary initiative lie vested in the masses, which we must unchain and guide. Anyone who regards the non-Communist workers as

a "reactionary mass," is on the wrong track, especially to-day, in the time of a revolutionary upsurge which is penetrating *all* sections of the working class. But does this statement of the necessity of learning from the masses mean that we must accept *everything* that the masses want, and put it into practice, that the masses are *incapable* of putting forward demands in contradiction to their general class interests? No! I have *expressly* said that it often happens in practice that the masses put forward objectively counter-revolutionary demands, which we must reject. I said, "Not all partial demands which come from the masses themselves, are correct or acceptable to us!"

In another connection, in connection with a *concrete* case of united action, I expressed myself as follows:

"It can, however, also happen that we fail because the masses in question do not fully understand us in a *given situation*, or because we make clumsy proposals. In such cases, especially when we are concerned with the working masses, we have to reckon with this fact, subordinate ourselves, or to put it still better—be elastic, make other proposals and use other forms which the masses will accept."

How is this to be understood? I will make this clear by giving an example. Let us say that we want to organise a struggle in a certain factory against wage cuts. At a factory meeting, we propose an immediate strike. The majority of the workers reject this proposal. What are we to do? Raise a hue and cry against the workers? No! We have to reckon with the rejection of our proposal, for without a majority of the workers we can certainly not lead the strike. But can we be content with this? No! We must *at once*, on the very spot where our proposal has been rejected, make *other proposals*, let us say for a demonstration, or for a demonstrative strike with a fixed time-limit, or for other forms of struggle; meanwhile, of course, we will not cease to carry on further propaganda for the strike, to make preparations for it, and do all we can to win over the *entire* body of employees for the strike. It is in this sense that the word "subordinate" is to be understood. Is the procedure which I have described correct? Yes! If, however, you have gathered the impression from the word "subordinate," that we are proposing to adapt and subordinate ourselves to the state of feeling of the masses *in general*, then I do not insist upon this way of putting it.

We must not press formulas too far, especially when they can be wrongly interpreted.

In this question, therefore, our logical conclusion is as follows: The Communists must take the masses *as they are* with all their merits and weaknesses. They must understand how to work among the masses *in all situations*, to develop their good qualities, and overcome their weaknesses, and thus to win over the masses to our side. This, however, cannot be done unless we are exactly acquainted with the changing moods of the masses and determine the concrete forms, methods and tactics of our *approach* to the masses accordingly.

The second question concerns the rôle of the Communist Party as leader in the formation of a united front. I emphasise in advance that in all our speeches we have spoken of the united front *from below*, and it goes without saying that we *reject* the idea of replacing the united front from below, by a policy of coalition with the Social-Democrats. This, therefore, does not enter into the discussion at all. What we must discuss, is the question of *how* we can realise the rôle of the Party, as leader in the united front from below.

In order to take over leadership in the united front at all, the united front must first be created. How is the united front to be created? By associating ourselves with the daily necessities of the masses, calling them to wage a common struggle, mobilising them and organising the struggle. The united front thus comes into being *in the process of struggle*. Without struggle there can be *no* united front. Can we make our leadership in the united front *a priori* condition? No! How then are we to tackle the problem of leadership? We must face this question on the basis of proletarian democracy. *The workers themselves, all workers*, must elect their organs of leadership for an action, for a strike, etc. And in these organs we must fight for the leadership; through these organs we must realise our leading rôle. Is this practicable? Yes it is! We can cite hundreds of examples, and in those cases where *we* have taken the *initiative* in struggle, in those cases where the masses *actually*, from the start, saw us at the head, there our task was even comparatively easy and simple, our tactical leadership was accepted, nay welcomed, by the whole of the masses as a matter of course. Take the miners' strike in north-west Bohemia* as an example; all the tactical measures in this strike were decided upon in the Political Bureau. But, before they were put into execution they were first mooted by the Communists in the democratically-elected organs, conferences and strike com-

mittees; the Communists put the measures before these organs, and the latter decided upon them, so that they became measures taken by the *whole mass of workers*. Thus, in this miners' strike we *realised* our leadership in *actual fact*, although the Communists were in a minority on the strike committees. Or take another case: We are leading an unemployed movement, in which hundreds of thousands of unemployed participate. In the spring, when this movement was at its height, there were 15,000 action-committees of the unemployed, on which the Communists were in a minority. And despite this fact, we, and we only, are leading this great united front, which has involved great struggles and which was also able to win great material and political successes. The Communist Party of Czecho-Slovakia is the acknowledged leader of the unemployed of Czecho-Slovakia. Everybody knows this. The sparrows whistle it on the roof. And how have we realised our leadership? Through the democratically-elected organs of the unemployed. Again, we have a great peasant movement in the Carpathian Ukraine. Who is leading this movement? We are. How? Through the democratically-elected organs of the peasantry, on which the Communists form an infinitesimal minority. Did the masses know, in the miners' strike, in the unemployment movement, in numerous other strikes and in the Carpathian Ukraine, that we, the Communists, were the leaders? Yes, they did! And they showed that they knew it too. Immediately after the miners' strike, municipal elections were held in the important miners' districts of north-west Bohemia and Ostrau, and in these elections we attained a smashing success. We are rapidly winning votes at the municipal elections in the Carpathian Ukraine. There are a large number of places where we had almost nothing in 1929 and where we have now won a clear majority of the votes. At the elections, in general, we are winning on an average, 46 per cent., as compared with 1929 in the Carpathian-Ukraine, 56 per cent. in Slovakia, and 34 per cent., on an average, throughout the whole country. That is how the masses acknowledged our leadership in their struggles. In addition to this, I can quote an eloquent passage from the bourgeois press, in regard to the miners' struggle of north-west Bohemia. The bourgeois paper, the *Brüxer Zeitung*, published the following estimate of the results of the struggle in a leading article written on April 20, the day the struggle was broken off:

"This strike was not a Communist strike. It originated in full-blooded unrest and indignation, and was international and non-political. A real genuine miners' strike, for which the

*See No. 11/12, "Communist International" (1932).

organisations also, had no decisive importance. But the Communists are vigilant people, and waiting their opportunity. It would be childish to close one's eyes to the astounding phenomena, which were apparent to anyone who had eyes to see. The Communists were winning the flames, but the fire broke out without their help. They were at the head, but the whole district marched behind them. Twice the workers entered Brůx, and their militant attitude has probably not yet been forgotten. When their opportunity arrived, the Communists did not hesitate to take their place at the head of the movement — a place which all others were avoiding—and they maintained it to the end. However, among those who followed them, were many whose names are on the lists of other trade unions, German and Czechish, Marxist and National, many who will now have to seriously reflect where their allegiance lies, and of whom, it is uncertain under what banner they will fight, if there is another strike . . . It is, unfortunately, a fact that Communism, which had greatly diminished, in importance, in the mining district of north-west Bohemia, has been unimaginably regenerated, and extended by this strike, and has once again become a power. Communism is the real victor in this struggle. This fact will make itself felt, both politically, and perhaps also in other respects."

It may perhaps be objected that in our leadership of the united front *through* the democratically elected organs of all militant workers, the personality of the Party is too much obscured and veiled, that it does not find clear expression. Is this correct? No! The very facts which we have just quoted prove this. Do we perhaps conceal our revolutionary Communist views and principles from the masses? Are we ashamed, so to speak, to appear before the masses as Communists? No, on the contrary! In the elected organs of mass action we make proposals and defend them as *Communists*. We speak at their meetings, gatherings and demonstrations as *Communists*. We seek, by word and deed, to convince the masses of the correctness of *all* our views, up to and including the doctrine of the united struggle for power. To be sure, in our *concrete* struggle, in our concrete proposals for struggle and action, in individual cases of separate concrete action, we adjust ourselves to the *concrete* degree of maturity, which has been reached by the masses, whom we want to lead to *concrete* struggle. Is this procedure correct? I hold—absolutely! One comrade has stated here that the obscuring of the face of the Party found its expression in the fact that,

during the strike in north-west Bohemia, and in Brůnn, recruiting for the Red trade unions and the Party was avowedly forbidden by us, in order not to split the united front. This is *not* true. The fact is that we rejected a proposal that the *strike committees* should be asked, at the beginning of the strike, to recruit members for the Party, and the Red trade unions. We may be told that we were wrong to reject this proposal. Besides this, we published an appeal at the united conference which took place in Brůx at the end of the strike, in which the conference called upon the miners to enter the Red miners' union. And, at this conference, we proposed and *carried through* something else, namely the resolution that all miners should take part, as a body, in the *Communist* May Day Demonstration. The result was that the other May Day demonstrations, of our opponents, either had to be called off altogether, or came to nothing, whereas the masses took part in our demonstration; this includes several Social-Democratic and Czechish Socialist organisations which took part in a body behind their banners. Recruiting *was* of course carried on for the Party, and the trade unions. In Brůx we were able to enroll over a thousand new members in the Red miners' union, and as many again in Ostrau (there being some 85,000 miners in the whole of Czecho-Slovakia). Of Party members we enrolled 705 in Brůx during April and May, 1932 (i.e., during and after the strike), 411 in Ostrau, 256 in Kladno (where there was also a strike) and 333 in Brůnn. This is, to be sure, a very small number, but that is to be attributed to a neglect of recruiting as such and belongs to another chapter.

Our conclusion in this matter must therefore be: our actual leadership in the united front is not to be forcibly foisted upon the masses, it will not be attained by declamations, it must be fought for, on the basis of proletarian democracy, it must be attained by a stubborn, patient, self-sacrificing upholding of the class interests of the proletariat, in a concrete struggle for these interests.

The third question is concerned with the struggle in principle against Social-Democracy. It has been said, during the course of the discussion, that our proposals have the effect of weakening the struggle of principle against Social-Democracy. This is, of course, far from our thoughts, and represents a violent distortion of our ideas. This assertion is based on various formulations of ours, in regard to the question of *how* one is to approach the Social-Democratic workers in the formation of a united front. I have said, for example, that we could address Social-Democratic workers as follows:

"Social-Democratic workers, we hold different views, but we are agreed on one point: that the distress is intolerable, and that we must fight against it. Let us unite on this common issue, and fight together. And if you believe that we are wrong in other questions, you will be able to see if this view is correct, on the basis of your experience."

We say to them further:

"You should not trust your leaders," . . . but it does no harm if we say to them also: "It is not necessary, nor do we demand it of you, that you trust our word. View us not according to what we say, but according to what we do, and so you will convince yourselves."

Does this mean that we refrain from criticising the policy of Social-Democracy before Social-Democratic workers? Does this mean that we hush up our fundamental differences of opinion with Social-Democracy, before these workers? By no means. And once again I will base my remarks on our practice. *Never before* have we carried on so many and such thorough discussions, on the fundamental problems of the class struggle, with the Social-Democratic workers, as at this moment when we are approaching them in the way described above and fighting shoulder to shoulder with them in many struggles. These workers come to us *of their own accord*; they come to our meetings, to the conferences of action committees, to united front conferences, they write to us personally, or address letters to our newspapers and ask questions themselves about our views, on the rôle of the state, on the revolution, on participation in bourgeois governments, on the Soviet Union, etc., etc. I repeat: *Never before* have we approached the Social-Democratic workers so closely; *never before* have we carried on so much discussion with them. We hold, for example, special study evenings together with Social-Democratic workers and their lower functionaries. Can this be described as a weakening of the struggle in principle against Social-Democracy? No, it is a strengthening of the struggle in close connection with a bold use of the tactics of a united front from below. What is the artistry demanded for a struggle against Social-Democracy? Does it consist of shouting "traitors!" from morning till night? No, it consists in bringing the Social-Democratic workers to the point where *they themselves* hurl the word "traitors," in the face of their leaders. And this is the result which we actually attained to a great extent in the miners' strike at Brne. Have we in practice had weaknesses and opportunistic mistakes in this sphere? Yes, even very many of them. One important

opportunistic mistake occurred, for example, in Ostrau, before the strike, when our comrades, at first, permitted themselves to be taken in tow by the Social-Democrats. Do we criticise such mistakes, do we exert ourselves to eradicate them? Certainly. The IV Plenum of the C.C. of the Communist Party of Czecho-Slovakia even criticised the mistakes made at Ostrau, *before* the strike began. In the resolution of the C.C. we read:

"The C.C. notes that there have been expressions of fundamentally incorrect views, within the Party, on the character of "Left" Social-Fascism, and its manœuvres. These incorrect views estimate the "Left" manœuvres of Social-Fascism as an objective underestimation of the process of radicalisation going on among the masses. Such views inevitably lead to serious mistakes in the tactics of the united front—mistakes which have been committed recently at Ostrau, in particular. Though such mistakes as those committed at Ostrau have been recognised and corrected in good time, they yet constitute a serious impediment to the process of the Socialist workers' transition, from their Social-Fascist leaders to the revolutionary front and to Communism."

The Party leadership, of course, did not content itself with making these remarks, but interfered *immediately* on the spot, and in the very heat of battle, during the preparations for the strike, conducted an inner-Party campaign, right down to the bottom, down to the individual members in the factories. Furthermore, it must be known that the workers in Ostrau *did strike*, even three times in succession, despite the most rabid terrorism; and in the third strike over one half of the whole district was involved. And during the strike, in Ostrau, we succeeded in dealing an especially hard blow to the *Fascist* trade union. This, then, is our attitude to the mistakes we make. We see them, and make serious efforts, often with success, to correct them.

Our conclusion in this question is: Taking the feelings and the prejudices of the Social-Democratic workers into account in our approach to them *does not* mean a weakening of the struggle in principle against Social-Democracy. On the contrary. Not until we get into close touch with the Social-Democratic workers, and fight together with them, is it easy for us to strike a blow at Social-Democracy.

The fourth question is concerned with the revolutionising of the economic struggle, or the uniting of the economic with the political struggle. In my speech I said that this problem cannot be solved, by mechanically attaching any

political slogans to the economic demands. Was I right in this? I think I was. For the problem was a complicated one, and it consists, generally speaking, in this, that we, first of all, know how to put forward such political slogans during the economic struggle as have immediate connection with the conduct of the economic struggle; secondly that we employ such political slogans which are directly connected with the economic struggle (e.g., in the present struggle in Germany against the economic emergency decrees, the slogan of the overthrow of the originator of these emergency decrees, the Papen Government). But the *most important thing* is the use of *revolutionary forms of struggle*. I once again base my remarks on our practice. Take the case of Freiwaldau. That was originally an economic struggle of the workers, both employed and unemployed. The state power opposed this struggle. It forbade strikes and demonstrations. The workers would not submit to this, they went on strike and demonstrated under our leadership, in spite of the prohibition. It came to shooting. Eight workers, men and women, were shot by the gendarmes. What was the answer? Political mass strike throughout the whole district, lasting for three days. The whole district stopped work, until the burial of the workers, who had been shot. Throughout the country, there was a wave of over 150 political protest strikes, hundreds of demonstrations, thousands of protests and proclamations from all sections of the working population. This happened under our leadership, in response to our appeal, under our slogans. And the result? A respite in the terrorism, throughout the whole country, for a certain period. Freiwaldau became an affair of high political importance. Or take the case of the Carpathian-Ukraine. This was originally an economic movement of the working and peasant masses—for bread, for corn, for work, for relief, against taxes, etc. At the same time there were no national political and political slogans. However, the economic demands preponderated. How did we begin? We went about literally from house to house, presented concrete demands generally for every workers' and peasants' family, collected more than a hundred thousand signatures for these demands, and then formulated the demands concretely for each individual village, and then confirmed at village meetings, presented them to the local authorities, backed up by the entire mass of village workers, united several villages together, and brought the demands before the district authorities at the head of a thousands-strong mass of villagers; waited a little, until we had collected even greater masses and then marched into the district centres.

Meanwhile, we began chasing away the bailiff's officers from the villages; the people stopped paying taxes, even if they did have a couple of *kronen* left in their pockets, great masses of them started going into the forests, and getting themselves wood, driving their cattle on to the landlords' pasture lands, clearing the forest from the meadows and pastures which had been enclosed, etc., etc. All this could not be done with kid gloves on, either by the state power; or by the workers and peasants. Again and again, there was shooting, and sometimes the military had to be called in. At the same time, a great campaign of protest and solidarity went on throughout the whole country, accompanied by political protest strikes and demonstrations, not only in the Ukraine, and in Slovakia, but also in the Czechish and German districts. And the results? A temporary frustration of the attempt to pacify the Carpathian-Ukraine with Pilsudski methods, an actual cessation of distraints of property in individual districts, the actual utilisation of the forests, the actual *non-payment* of lease-rent and debts, a certain amount of material relief, and a 46 per cent. rise in the votes cast for Communism. In all this we, *the Party*, were the leaders from beginning to end, step by step, from one stage to the next. I will not say any more about north-west Bohemia. I have already told in my speech how we there answered the terrorist methods of the government step for step, blow for blow, from beginning to end in conjunction with the broad masses, from the first demonstrations right up to the general strike in the whole district, ending in a wave of actions of solidarity, and protest throughout the whole country. It is *thus*, then, that we have led the economic struggles, and combined them with the political struggle. Anyone, who wants to, can call this "economism."

Our conclusion in this question must therefore be: It is not by mechanically foisting on political slogans that we can revolutionise the economic struggle, but by organically combining economic and political questions, and *above all* by employing *militant measures and militant methods*, in carrying through both political and economic demands.

The fifth question is concerned with the content of our work in the reformist trade unions, and the methods of this work. A directive of our Red trade unions has been quoted here, in which it was impressed upon the Red trade union groups, that they must try to win over the reformist trade union groups for their participation, en masse, in actions for various partial demands of the workers. This directive has been described as a mistake. Is this correct? I think

not. Let us consider the matter. First of all, is it possible to win over *whole* groups of the reformist trade unions for the class struggle, and for united front? Yes, it is. For, at the present time, the process of radicalisation has penetrated deeply, not only into the ranks of the organised reformist members, but also into the ranks of the functionaries. Secondly, does this in any way mean that we are ready to capitulate to the rotten and incorrigible elements, who are working hand in glove with the employers, and their lackeys, and of whom there is no small number even among the leaders of the various groups? No. In the directive referred to above we read:

"The mobilisation of the broad masses of workers in the various enterprises and localities, the comradely but clear criticism of the failings and inhibitions in the procedure of the reformist trade union groups, an open struggle against the reformist leaders, and corrupt worker—functionaries who represent the open enemies of working class unity, these are the basic principles in accordance with which we must direct our whole procedure."

Thirdly, how can the workers organised in reformist unions be best won over in order that the reformist trade union groups may also be won over? By defending the day-to-day class interests of these workers. But from this it follows that the *content* of our work in the reformist trade unions must consist precisely in this defence of the interests of the workers organised in those unions, the defence of their interests against the employers, against the state, and of course also against the trade union bureaucrats. The struggle against these last forms an integral part of the entire class struggle.

As regards the *methods* of our work in the reformist trade unions, what has been said about the united front, applies here also, in its essence, *mutatis mutandis*: To take up *all* points, which arouse dissatisfaction, among the workers in the reformist trade unions; to utilise *everything* in order to organise an opposition to the treacherous leadership; to be acquainted and take cognizance of *everything* which goes on among the masses. While preserving the greatest clarity in regard to aims and principles, there is the greatest need for *elasticity* here in the putting forward of concrete demands and slogans, as also in the employment of organisational methods.

One more point: Does the broad movement of opposition within the reformist trade unions form an integral part of the Red trade union movement? In so far as we lead this opposition, of course it does! Does this need to be *formally* declared, and is *this* the main point? No, the formal uniting of an opposition movement with

the Red trade union movement, is first and foremost, a question of the *degree of revolutionary maturity* in one or another opposition movement.

Our conclusion in this question is therefore as follows: The *content* of our work in the reformist trade unions is the defence of the daily class interests of the workers organised in those unions, not only against the employers, but also against the state, and the trade union bureaucrats. The *methods* to be employed in this work are essentially the same as we employ in the movement for the united front in general. The *aim* of the work is to win over a majority of the workers organised in the reformist trade unions. With or without subscriptions is a question of secondary importance.

The sixth and last question is concerned with the relation of the leadership of the Czechoslovakian Party with the Communist Party of Germany and its leadership. We have taken concrete examples from the practice of the German Party, and subjected them to criticism. In this, we want to say expressly that the line of the German Party is correct, and we have declared that, in agreement with the Comintern and with all other Parties of the Communist International, we are supporting the leadership of the German Party with all our power.

We are not so naïve, or frivolous, that we are not able to see what tremendous difficulties the German Party has to fight against, what great obstacles it has to overcome. And we are of the opinion, that, despite all these great difficulties, the German Party is on the way to fulfilling its great revolutionary tasks.

The sense of our criticism was to assist our German comrades on this path. The merits of the content of this criticism can, and ought to, be discussed. We do not insist on any formulations which may be bad or not free from reproach, or which are subject to false interpretation. This applies in particular to two questions: to our formulation on the character of the struggles going on in Germany, and on the prospects for the development of Fascism. It must be clearly stated that: in Germany the economic struggles are in a high degree interwoven with the political mass struggle, that they influence one another reciprocally, and assume ever higher forms. However, it is impossible to skip over the stage of economic struggle. National Fascism will break up in proportion, and with the same rapidity, as we are able to lead the masses of the *working class* in great mass struggles. We should not, however, reckon on an *automatic* collapse of the National-Fascists. At any rate, we say: We will fight most determinedly against any attempt to misuse our criticism, as a weapon,

against the line of the German Party, and the leadership of the German Party.

Our conclusion in this question is therefore: We are in solidarity with the German Party and its leadership.

I conclude. Comrade Lozovsky has given us two pieces of advice: Not to lose our heads in the hour of success, not to get

swollen-headed; and to be always ready to learn. Certainly! We are in perfect agreement. And that is what we are doing. We know our weak points and are working consistently to overcome them. And we are learning, too. We have proved that, and will prove it again in the future.

Our Party will lead the Czecho-Slovakian proletariat to victory.

SPEECH BY COMRADE ERCOLI

WE have reached the end of the work of the plenary session of the Executive Committee of the Communist International.

For three weeks we, who represent the Communist Parties of the whole world, the representatives of the vanguard of the world proletariat, have thoroughly examined the situation which is before us to-day. We have gathered in order to examine the present objective situation of the capitalist world, to examine the position of the workers' and peasants' revolutionary movement and the tasks which we have before us.

From the very first day, our discussions have been full of the consciousness of the gravity of the situation and the importance of the tasks before us.

The resolutions are full of the same consciousness that the situation before us is not a period of development of Pacifism, but of big struggles, wars and revolutions.

We started our work by the statement that the relative stabilisation of capitalism was at an end. We have analysed the significance of this definition and its results, which we have tried to set out in our resolutions in the simplest and most popular way.

But, before we break up, it is perhaps necessary for us to make an effort in order to get a clear idea of what this end of relative capitalist stabilisation, which we have discussed at length, actually is. May be this effort will enable us to acquire a concrete, life-like and precise notion of our fundamental task, and its importance, a precise notion of the responsibility which rests on us, of the spirit which we must put into the fulfilment of our tasks and into our whole future work.

The end of relative capitalist stabilisation means that the whole capitalist world is suffering from new and profound upheaval. The crisis is deepening. The bourgeoisie is desperately seeking for a way out by means of violence and war.

The contradictions between the imperialists are becoming graver and graver while Socialist con-

struction in the U.S.S.R. is making progress. The capitalist and proletarian worlds are opposed to each other in the most irreconcilable fashion.

The end of capitalist stabilisation means that, in order to face the situation, the bourgeoisie is mobilising its forces for a war directed against the Soviet Union, for its offensive against the working class, for new reductions in wages, for reductions in the living standard of the working class, for depriving new scores of millions of workers of bread, for still more increasing the millions strong army of hungry unemployed in the world.

The end of capitalist stabilisation means that our class enemy, rent by ever graver contradictions, is gathering his forces, it means the growth of Fascism, the persecution of Communists in all countries, accelerated preparations for imperialist war, it means, at the same time, the continuation of the revolutionary upsurge of the masses, new hundreds of millions of workers, peasants, unemployed, oppressed and colonial peoples, joining the struggle to defend their bread, their life.

The end of capitalist stabilisation means the victory of the red army in revolutionary China.

We have the strike movement, the revolutionary peasants' movement in Spain. We have the wave of economic and political strikes in Poland, accompanied by peasants' revolts.

We have the wave of strikes in Czecho-Slovakia, the impetuous gathering of millions of workers in Germany, in the course of the class struggle of our Party.

The end of capitalist stabilisation is seen in the strike of 100,000 Belgian miners who have revolted against their bosses, against their reformist leaders.

The end of capitalist stabilisation is seen in the mass movement which is arising more slowly but surely and certainly in countries of Fascist dictatorships.

The end of capitalist stabilisation is seen in those great mass movements, those deep streams of millions and millions of human beings,

workers, peasants, colonial toilers who are awaking to the daily struggle against the employers, against capitalist war, against imperialism, in the deep stream of these millions who are gathering together, who are on the march, who are marching along the path of revolution.

Comrades, in the midst of these millions of people, where do we stand? Where are the Communists? Where is the revolutionary vanguard? Is it at its battle post?

That is the problem which stands before us to-day.

In the course of the work of our Plenum, we have carefully examined the situation of our movement. We have examined the achievements and weaknesses of our Parties, we have marked a whole series of successes: the increase in the number of our members, the development of our influence among the working masses of China and the successes of the red army, the progress achieved by the Chinese Soviet power. In Poland, the fact that our Party has not only doubled its forces in the struggle, but has placed itself, to a greater extent, at the head of the strike movement and the peasants' movements. In Germany, the fact that our Communist Party, the largest Party of the International, that Party which is an example to all parties of the International in capitalist countries, is making a rapid advance in the conquest of the majority of the working class and is already succeeding in breaking through the walls of the Social-Democratic organisations and in detaching groups of Social-Democrat workers who have come under the influence of our ideology while members of Social-Democratic organisations.

We have all heard to what experience of mass work has led in Czecho-Slovakia, work for the defence of the direct interests of the workers, what experiences the comrades have communicated to us.

This shows that the Communist vanguard is already on the way to take up its proper place.

But we recognised at this Plenum and we must frankly repeat, for it has been stated in the resolutions, that those successes are not sufficient, they show some advance but the greatest part of the way still remains to be covered and we must make it under new conditions. In the light of the tasks which are before us, we are stating the end of capitalist stabilisation and the transference of the capitalist world to a new period of wars and revolutions and in the light of those tasks we are stating the backwardness of our movement in all capitalist countries. The question as to where we stand in the large plants, where the decisive masses of the industrial proletariat are assembled, is a most acute one. Where are we in the big plants in Germany,

France, England? Have we succeeded in transforming the factories, in accordance with the instructions of Lenin, into strongholds of Communism? What is the state of our work among the unemployed?

These, comrades, are the three items to which we have given special care in all the discussions of the Plenum and on which our Party must dwell at the present moment and in the future. There is a big upsurge of the masses, symptoms of the end of the capitalist system, are coming from the factories, from the mass of employed workers, from the mass of unemployed and therefore from a mass which is still under the influence of reformist ideology and still tied to the reformist organisations.

The prospect before us is that the rising mass movement will break the cadres of the reformist organisations. The prospect before us is a crisis of Social-Democracy, but this crisis will not achieve the result to which it must come without action on our part. Our action must start in the factories and develop itself in the widest manner in the reformist trade union organisations. That action will only succeed in destroying the basis of the influence of Social-Democratic ideology over the working masses, in breaking through struggle the cadres of the Social-Democracy, and breaking, in the struggle, the main enemy in the ranks of the working class, in accomplishing our basic revolutionary task, if we work in the reformist trade unions, reinforce the revolutionary trade union opposition and red trade unions, if we work in the factories.

We must work among the unemployed, show the mass of workers, by our daily work, that we are the best fighters in the defence of the most elementary claims of the working class, in defence of its wages and for their increase, in defence of the life of the working class.

Have we done everything in this respect since the last meeting of the Plenum, have we made any decisive progress? We have not made any as yet, and, even at this moment, which is an important one, our work lags behind our resolutions. That deficiency must be eliminated.

That is the main task before us. That is the basic condition for making a decisive advance in the conquest of the majority of the working class, for making the mass movement take a step forward, so that we may place ourselves at the head of the economic movement, the strike movement and political movement, prepare the masses for the development of economic and political movements into decisive struggles for power, for the dictatorship of the proletariat.

Comrades! the definition of the differing character of the general objectives, which we have given, implies a differentiation in the devel-

opment of the capitalist crisis in various countries.

In Germany, we have a situation where reactionary and revolutionary forces are gathering and opposing each other in an extremely rapid manner.

Our task is to raise the ideological capacity of our Party, so as to be able to analyse with continuous attention and exactly understand, at every moment, the nature of the situation which we have before us and adapt our political line, our tactics to this situation. Now, more than at any other time, our ideological capacity must be allied with the capacity to do practical work, with the spirit of struggle, with the greatest development of the initiative of each Party and each Party organisation.

We speak of war, of revolutionary upsurge, of revolution. We do not know what the situation will be when the next session of the Communist International assembles. We do not know, in case of war, what connections we shall be able to maintain between the Parties of the Communist International and the centre of the Communist International. We do not know, during the development of the revolutionary struggle in each country, where strikes are going to develop and assume the character of mass political strikes; we do not know what connections we shall be able to have between the centre of our Party and the basic organisations.

In these circumstances we cannot advance unless we succeed in developing, to the widest extent, the initiative of our Party and of all the organisations of our Party, from the highest leading organisations down to the factory cell.

We see a movement of the masses in our direction, coming partly from the unorganised masses, partly from the workers organised in the reformist trade unions. That mass is seeking for a revolutionary direction, part of that mass wishes to join our ranks. Our task consists in succeeding in directing it and, in order to achieve this task, it is absolutely necessary for all Social-Democratic traditions to be overcome in our ranks. It is absolutely necessary, in order to achieve this task, for each Party to work with the greatest ideological and political steadiness.

We are advancing towards a period of great struggles. What will be the reaction in our ranks, in the ranks of the various parties in capitalist countries with regard to these struggles? Will there be elements which will weaken just when it is necessary, on the contrary, to show the greatest amount of strength? Can we put aside such a prospect? No! We must have that prospect here before us and we must learn

to understand the importance for all the Parties of the Communist International, under the present conditions of struggle, of a Leninist ideology of revolutionary Marxism, against right opportunism, which is the main danger, and against deviations of the left wing.

All our Parties have not yet become real Bolshevik Parties. They will become Bolshevik Parties in the course of struggle, but, beside the great ideological and political confusion of the Parties of the Second International, we are an International unified on the basis of a programme which is a banner to the workers, to the oppressed peoples of the whole world.

We are a world Party which draws its strength from an ideology and tactics which we have been taught by our great leaders, Marx, Engels, Lenin, Stalin, which has been taught us by the experience of three revolutions. All our Parties are not yet Bolshevik Parties, they will become so in the course of the struggle, but we have at our head, at the head of the Communist Party of the U.S.S.R., Lenin's Party, the Party directed by Comrade Stalin, the leader of the world proletariat, which shows the whole International an example of ideological steadfastness, of irreconcilable struggle against opportunism, against Social-Democratic and petty-bourgeois opportunist deviations to the right and to the left, the way of close alliance with the masses, obtained by daily work in contact with the masses.

The victories of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, the victories of Socialist construction in the Soviet Union are a guarantee of victory for the whole world proletariat, for the whole Communist International.

Strengthened by the experience of the Bolshevik Party, let us go back to our work, let us try to bring into our work the same spirit of struggle, the same practical spirit which we have tried to put in our resolutions. No mere words. Work! Let us try to overcome the gap which exists between our decisions and our resolutions. Let us take root in the factories, let us work thoroughly in the reformist trade unions, let us work among the mass of unemployed, let us penetrate into Fascist trade union organisations, into the army, into the navy. Let us practice revolutionary class struggle throughout the world, the struggle for bread, for the workers' freedom, against war, against the régime of capitalist exploitation, for the dictatorship of the proletariat!

Long live the Communist International!

Long live the Bolshevik Party and its leader—Stalin!

Long live the world revolution!

(Thunderous applause).

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